

AN ANALYSIS OF THE JEWISH INFLUENCE
ON MARTOV'S REVOLUTIONARY CAREER, 1891-1907

by

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PREFACE

The role of the Jews in the Russian revolutionary movement has been the subject of considerable speculation on the part of historians. It is generally agreed that the number of Jews in the movement was far out of proportion to their numerical representation in the country. A problem develops, however, when the role of the Jewish intelligentsia is discussed. Because they embraced a policy of Russification, were frequently brought up outside the Pale of Settlement, and rejected the religion of their fellow Jews, the question arises as to whether the members of the Jewish intelligentsia were then Russians, or Jews, or perhaps a distinct group in the history of Russia to be studied independently of the others. This problem appears when an attempt is made to assess Martov's contribution to the revolutionary movement. Trotsky was once asked if he regarded himself as a Jew or a Russian. He replied: "Neither, I am a Social Democrat, and nothing else." Martov might have answered in the same manner, but the historian needs to know more than that. An examination of Martov's writings suggests that his brand of social democracy was strongly influenced by his Jewish background and that many of the contradictions that appear in his revolutionary world view can only be explained by reference to this influence.

The need for a study of this nature might be demonstrated by the fact that no biography of Martov has ever been published, no collection of his writings has appeared, and virtually none of these writings have ever been translated into

English. The research problem in tracking down even the most important documents has thus been very challenging.

Only a handful of books have been published about the early development of Russian Social Democracy; of these, most are totally inadequate for an understanding of this phase of the Russian revolutionary movement. Some exceptions to this are: Leopold Haimson's The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism; F. I. Dan's Proiskhozhdenie Bol'shevizma..., an amazingly objective study considering that Dan was Martov's brother-in-law and one of his close companions; and Bertram Wolfe's Three Who Made a Revolution. As a result, this researcher has had to rely on evidence obtained chiefly from primary sources--that is, the polemical writings and memoirs of Yuri Martov--available in this country through the inter-library loan system for the core of this study.

While this thesis will be focused on certain specific questions relating to Martov's revolutionary career from 1890 to 1907 and will not be aimed at presenting a broad survey of the era, some attention will be paid to the complex of ideas identifiably held by the Jewish intelligentsia and its relation to the whole Russian revolutionary movement.

The transliteration used in this thesis is that utilized by the Harvard Russian Research Center. The dates cited, where important to the understanding of the event, have not been changed from the old Julian Calendar.

CHAPTER I

MARTOV AND THE JEWISH REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

The major theme of the Jews in Russia from the partitions of Poland (1772-1795) to the present has been the struggle for emancipation. Before this date there were few Jews in Russia. In the sixteenth century, when the Moscovite princes began uniting the independent principalities into a Russian State, no Jews were permitted to reside within its boundaries. The reasons for this were originally of a religious character. N. Varadinov, official historian of the Ministry of Interior during the reign of Nicholas I, refers to the fear of Jewish influence on Russian Orthodoxy in the following observation:

The history of Jewish affairs since 1649 bears the stamp of distrust toward the followers of the Mosaic faith. One of the reasons for this attitude is the fact that Jews, through their false teachings, have lured to their religion adherents of other faiths, even those of the Christian persuasion. Because of this, their civic rights were constantly limited and their immigration from other countries forbidden. On several occasions they were completely driven out from Russia.¹

From the origin of the Moscovite state until the reign of Catharine II, the policy of keeping the Jews out of Russia was maintained. As a result of the first partition of Poland however, Russia gained a Jewish population of two hundred thousand. By 1795, as other Polish-Lithuanian lands were annexed to

¹Cited in Louis Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia* (2 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), I, 7. Mr. Greenberg asserts that Varadinov's claim that the Jews proselytized Christians was ridiculous.

Russia, the number of Jews reached nine hundred thousand.² Since it seemed impossible to banish this many Jews from Russian soil, the program of the government was to restrict the Jews to the area extracted from Poland and Lithuania. In a series of discriminatory legislative acts, culminating in the ukaz of 1791 when the Jews were specifically barred from certain areas, the Jewish Pale of Settlement was officially established.³

Despite the promise of reform of the official state position during the reign of Alexander I, the Jews were to be disappointed. After the Congress of Vienna Alexander was less willing to make liberal concessions to the Russian people, let alone the alien Jews.

In 1835, during the reign of Nicholas I, a new code of regulations was issued which clearly defined the Pale of Settlement and confirmed all previous anti-Jewish legislation. The Pale consisted of the Lithuanian provinces of Kovno, Vilno, Grodno, and Minsk; the southwestern provinces of Vohlyn and Podol; Vitebsk and Mogilev in White Russia; Chernigov and Poltava excluding the crown villages in Little Russia; Kherson, Ekaterinoslav, Taurida, and Bessarabia excluding Sevastopol in New Russia; the province of Kiev excluding the capital; and

²Simon Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland (3 vols.; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1918), I, 307.

³Ibid., p. 310.

the Baltic provinces (for old settlers only).⁴

The "great reforms" of Alexander II produced new hope for the Jews. Some Jews in fact were granted the right of unrestricted residence and the opportunity for government service. For the most part, these Jews were educated at institutions of higher learning and were a long way advanced toward assimilation. For the masses of Jews in the Pale of Settlement, the "tsar liberator" did very little. In 1880, when the reforming zeal of Alexander II turned to reaction, the Jews were the first to suffer.

One of the reasons for the renewed persecution of the Jews was the rise of industrialization in Russia. Before the 1870's and 1880's the Jewish people had been prevented from taking part in the economy. Residential restrictions limited the number of Jewish industrial workers. Even agricultural occupations were denied the Jewish masses.⁵ Rapid industrialization threatened to destroy the Pale as an increased demand for workers and an opportunity to make a living allowed many Jews to afford an education for their children and provided capital to establish their own industry and commerce.

The failure of the government to Russify the Jewish masses---a virtual impossibility when they were forced to live in the Ghettos of western Russia with no contacts with the

⁴Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, I, 11.

⁵Solomon M. Schwarz, The Jews in the Soviet Union (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1951), p. 8.

Russian people--and the fear that these alien and dangerous people might be unleashed by industrialization, led to a severe oppression and persecutien, reinforced by new anti-Jewish legislation. Efforts to Russify the Ghetto were abandoned and as Schwartz writes: "It [Judaism] was left to suffocate in the narrowness, darkness, and economic hopelessness of its ghetto existence."⁶

The Jewish intellectual responded to the atmosphere of new hope, encouraged by the early reforms of Alexander II, by supporting a secular movement known by the Hebrew name of Haskalah (enlightenment). Haskalah was to be the program through which the Jew could attain emancipation. Based on the principles of eighteenth-century French rationalism, the Jewish intellectual saw in Haskalah the promise of a new era-- "A vision of deliverance from the intolerable conditions of the ghetto."⁷

Dissatisfied with the day-to-day existence in the shtetl, the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe,⁸ the followers of Haskalah, or maskilim as they were called, turned more and more to the realm of the spirit as they sought their indentity in the life of reason and enlightenment. The ideal of the

⁶Solomon M. Schwarz, The Jews in the Soviet Union, p. 9.

⁷Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, I, 20.

⁸For an interesting account of the psychological effects of life in the Shtetl, see: Ruth Landes and Mark Zborowski, "Hypotheses Concerning the Eastern European Jewish Family," Psychiatry, XIII (November, 1950), 447-464.

"good life" was a long way from reality. The Jewish intellectual thus became, in effect, cut off from the existing world.

The maskilim, however, did not participate to any great degree in the Jewish revolutionary movement. Only in the 1870's, with an increase of Jewish graduates from the universities, was there a significant number of Jews engaged in revolutionary activities. This group of young Jewish intellectuals while inheriting the love for abstract principles and fine webs of theory from their Haskalah predecessors were to go farther than the maskilim. Where the maskilim saw in assimilation the opportunity for achieving the "good life" for all Jewry, most of these university students felt that Russification would cause Jewry to disappear as a "race." The idea that there was such a thing as a Jewish race was seen only as a vestige of their isolation in the ghetto. Where the maskilim urged religious reform ("Be a Jew in your tent, and a man in the street.") to help eliminate the spiritual separatism of the Jews, the younger generation opposed religion entirely.⁹

Yuri Osipovich Martov was a second generation product of these rebellious university students. In order to understand the Jewish influence on his revolutionary career it is necessary to explore the "Jewishness" of the whole Russian Jewish revolutionary movement. Could there even be a Jewish movement

⁹Simon Dubnow, History of the Jews, II, 264.

if those who participated in the Russian revolutionary movement rejected their religion and sought to assimilate--to Russify--their whole existence? Another question that must be answered is to what extent the contribution of these revolutionaries was specifically Jewish in nature. To what extent was it impelled by motives that were of a Jewish nature as opposed to motives that were common to the members of the distinctly Russian movement? Was it, as Count Witte once said: "...The fault of our government. The Jews are too oppressed?"¹⁰ Did Martov have a personal sense of grievance because of the oppression of the Jewish people living in the Pale of Settlement, and did this cause him to become a revolutionary?

Some answers will be suggested in this thesis which may clarify the role Martov was to assume in the Russian Revolutionary movement.

Since revolutionary movements are the creation of intellectuals there could have been no Jewish revolutionary movement until the 1870's. At least there could have been little question of the participation of Jews alongside the Russians until there existed a Jewish intelligentsia sufficiently assimilated to understand Russia's problems in addition to their own. Indeed the very term intelligentsia is a peculiarly Russian term and not a Jewish term. Because of the importance

¹⁰Count Witte, Memoirs of Count Witte, trans. Abraham Yarmolinsky (Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1921) p. 380.

of the word intelligentsia to this discussion, a working definition must be established.

The intelligentsia in nineteenth century Russia was a "class" of intellectuals who embraced certain philosophic notions which included a monistic view of nature, socialism, and the concept of revolution. This is a very narrow definition but a necessarily narrow definition if one is to discuss the impact of the intelligentsia on the Russian revolution.

In Russia, the intelligentsia, both as an historical phenomenon and a social concept, has been intrinsically connected with the process of westernization. The Russian intelligentsia spoke of Westernization within the framework of the sets of categories, concepts, and symbols used by the precursors of the Slavophile-Westerner conflict. Is Russia historically bound to the West or does Russia's past and future lie to the East--to the "great Slavic peoples" and their Eastern outlook? The Russian intelligentsia became intrinsically bound to Westernization. Richard Pipes even contends that the intelligentsia was a by-product of Westernization.¹¹ At any rate, the Russian intelligentsia adopted not only the broad aspects of Western civilization--its cultural heritage, its modes of life, its history--as their own, but also adopted certain ideological movements which were "rationalist" in character--specifically the French and German positivist thought. French

¹¹Richard Pipes, Foreword to the issue "The Russian Intelligentsia," Daedalus, (Summer 1960), p. 439.

materialism was the vogue among the younger generation of the intelligentsia during the 1860's and 1870's. Louis Greenberg singles out Chernyshevsky and Pisarev as the two most important figures that influenced the Jewish intelligentsia, this Russified non-religious group of Jewish intellectuals described above.¹²

The Russian intelligentsia was to adopt this estranged group of Jewish intellectuals.¹³ In doing so the Russian movement preserved its western outlook. This is a very important point and one that most historians neglect to mention. The Jews of course were not the only group within the intelligentsia to stress the western aspects of the intelligentsia tradition but after the turn of the century they were perhaps the most important.

Within the intelligentsia, oriented as it was to the West, there developed two discernible elements. On the one hand was the Narodnik tradition concentrating its energies upon Russian

¹²Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, I. 123-124.

¹³The Jewish intellectual was no more "estranged" than the Russian intellectual. Martin Malia described this alienation in concrete terms when he wrote: "In a society that throughout the nineteenth century was over ninety per cent illiterate, a gymnasium or a university education was in fact an extraordinary thing, which set its recipients apart in an exalted but also extremely isolated position. In the 1840's, in any one year there were only 3,000 university students in an empire of some 50 million inhabitants; in the 1860's there were only 4,500, and in the 1870's, just a little over 5,000, out of a population of some 60 million. Quite literally then the intelligentsia was the embodied intelligence of Russia." Martin Malia, "What is the Intelligentsia," Daedalus, LXXIX (Summer 1960), p. 444.

problems specifically. On the other hand was an internationalist tradition which later centered around Marxism. It will be argued that the Jewish intelligentsia represented the internationalist tradition and were thus more Westernized, whereas the specifically Russian intelligentsia gravitated more toward the Narodnik tradition--shall we say Slavophile tradition?

The development of this nascent nationalism in the Russian intelligentsia was probably inevitable. Historically Russia had evolved outside the influence of Western Europe. Russia had experienced no Reformation, no Renaissance, and no Enlightenment--until it was imported late in the eighteenth century. Russia's problems, seen from the eyes of the intelligentsia, could only be solved by throwing off the yoke of autocracy to allow Russia to catch up with the West. Since Russia's past was so different, Western solutions did not always work. There was no large middle class through which reform could be initiated. There was very little industrialization to encourage a change in the social and legal order. There remained only the peasant and the landowner.

The Narodnik tradition was essentially a Russian, and therefore not a Western tradition. It was inspired by the belief, promulgated by Herzen and later expanded by Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov, Lavrov, Mikhailovsky, Tkachev, to name just a few, that the peasant, through his tradition of revolt and his socialist instinct, would sweep away the tyranny of the autocracy and establish an era of freedom in Russia.

There were Jews among the Populists. Jewish revolutionaries could be found in all the various groupings, classifications, parties, factions, what have you, in the revolutionary movement. One of the founders of the Land and Liberty party was a Jew. For the most part, the Jewish intelligentsia did not participate to any great degree in the Narodnik movement. Leonard Shapiro reports that statistics prepared by the Russian authorities during the 1870's do not suggest that the number of Jews among the Narodniks was disproportionate to the total number of Jews in the country.¹⁴ Significantly enough there were no Jews among the leading ideologists of the movement.¹⁵ This is understandable when one considers that the Jewish intelligent, despite his assimilation, could hardly become attached to a movement that was "rooted in the mystique of Slav nationalism."¹⁶

Why did the Jew become a Narodnik? In all probability the Jewish intelligent saw in the goal of Populism--the establishment of a free society--an opportunity for Jewish emancipation as well.

The Jewish intelligentsia did resent the autocracy for its

¹⁴Leonard Shapiro, "The Role of the Jews in the Russian Revolutionary Movement," The Slavonic and East European Review, XL (December, 1961), 151.

¹⁵Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, II, 155.

¹⁶Leonard Shapiro, "Mikhailovsky and the Mystique of Populism," Slavonic and East European Review, XXXIV, (December, 1955), 57.

oppressive measures against Russian Jewry, but he also saw in a revolution the chance to be the equal of the Russian. To bring about this revolution, to guarantee the equality of the Jew and the Russian, the Jewish intelligentsia could not "wait for assistance from above," as Martov was to say in 1894, they had to work for it.¹⁷ The Jewish proletariat had to push aside their peculiar habits fostered by their life in the ghetto. They had to speak the Russian language. They had to break away from their religion which regulated every act of their daily existence--including dress and diet--which stood in the way of Russification.

The appeal of Marxism was very strong among the Jewish intelligentsia. Of all the parties in the Russian revolutionary movement the Social Democratic Party contained the most Jews. Lenin noted at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party that one third of all the delegates were Jews.¹⁸ Besides Martov there were two other Jews in the top leadership, Aksel'rod and Trotsky. While no statistics are available to this researcher as to the exact number of Jews in the Social Democratic Party at this time, it was undoubtedly far out of proportion to the number of Jews in Russia.

¹⁷M. Rafes, Ocherki po Istorii Dunda (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Sakhelgami, 1923), p. 26.

¹⁸Vladimir Ilich Lenin, Sochineniya (55 Vols., 5th ed; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Literatury, 1960), Vol. 6, 489.

Marxism of course was not a Russian doctrine but an internationalist doctrine.¹⁹ It offered a solution to Russia's problems that was based on the historical experience of Western Europe. The Jew in Russia, even the intelligentsia Jew, could more easily adjust to a cosmopolitan internationalist movement than a strictly nationalist movement. It might be argued that even Zionism was an internationalist persuasion. Marxism however had a special appeal to the Jew in the 1880's when industrialization spread through the Pale of Settlement.

The growth of industrialization in the Jewish Pale resulted in more than the usual social problems. Before the rise of the big cities and the growth of factories, the Jewish working class consisted primarily of the small artisan or craftsman and his employees.²⁰ Since the Jews were not allowed to pursue agricultural occupations, the labor force for the new industries was supplied by reducing the bulk of the Jewish craftsmen, employees, and other small employers to the status of permanent proletarians.

By far the most severe effect of industrialization in the

¹⁹Bertram D. Wolfe casts some doubt on the internationalism of Marx and Engels by pointing out their interests in German affairs above European, and thus international developments in the working class movement. To the Russian Marxist, particularly Martov and other members of the Jewish intelligentsia, the spirit of Marxism was internationalistic whether Marx was or not. Bertram D. Wolfe, "Nationalism and Internationalism in Marx and Engels," American Slavic and East European Review, XVII, (December, 1955), 19.

²⁰Solomon Schwarz, The Jews in the Soviet Union, p. 8.

Jewish Pale was that when a factory was forced to curtail production or completely close down during slack periods of the year, the economy of the Pale of Settlement was disrupted. With virtually no small industry to absorb some of the unemployed, many workers and their families faced starvation. The May Rules of 1882²¹ and the rigid enforcement of other anti-Jewish legislation bound the Jewish worker even more to the Pale. As a result, during the critical periods of unemployment no relief through migration was possible either. With an oversupply of labor, exploitation was rife.²²

It is not surprising then that the Jewish intelligentsia should embrace Marxism. The proletariat, whether he be Russian or Jew, was oppressed. Revolution was the only answer, but unlike Narodnik's scheme of revolution, the Marxist revolution was to be led by the proletariat--the universal working class.

It was this orientation that was responsible for Martov's revolutionary weltanschauung.

Yuri Osipovich Martov (Tsederbaum) was born on November

²¹Called the "Temporary Rules," the May Rules of 1882 prevented Jewish settlers from living in the villiages and hamlets of the Pale; Jews could not own or operate real estate or farms outside of the cities, nor could they do business on Sunday or other Christian holidays. These temporary rules remained in effect until 1917. Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, II, 30.

²²M. Rafes, Ocherki po Istorii Bunda, p. 4. Mr. Rafes writes in his introduction to this collection of essays that by 1896 the average working day of a Jewish worker was between fourteen and sixteen, and sometimes even eighteen hours, while the pay was as low as 2 or 3 rubles a week.

24, 1873 in Constantinople. Yuri's father worked for a Russian commercial company and was employed part-time as a correspondent in Turkey for the two leading journals in St. Petersburg, the Petersburgskaya Vedomosti and Novoe Vremya. Martov's grandfather, Alexander Tsederbaum, was deeply involved in Jewish affairs as the founder and editor of the first Hebrew newspaper ever published in Russia.²³ As Martov remarks in his memoirs; "Journalism was in my blood."²⁴ Yuri's mother, a Viennese by birth, addressed the child only in French and occasionally in New Greek. It was not until the family moved back to Russia at the beginning of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878 that Martov learned to speak Russian.

As was increasingly common among the Russified Jewish intellectual elite, the Tsederbaums were not religiously inclined. Martov recalls in his memoirs:

I knew that we were not Catholic and not Orthodox...and that instead of going to a Cathedral or a Polish Roman Catholic church...we were supposed to attend a synogogue to offer prayer. However, my parents and I never went except on one state occasion--the time of Alexander II's funeral. But the sense of belonging to some particular kind of non-Russian people such as the Jews was foreign to me.²⁵

²³Yuri Osipovich Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Z. I. Grshebina, 1922) p. 9. Herein-after cited as Martov, Zapiski. Simon Dubnow, a contemporary of Martov described Alexander Tsederbaum's Hebrew paper as "colorless" but acknowledges the contribution Tsederbaum made with the Jew's first newspaper. Simon Dubnow, History of the Jews, II, 65.

²⁴Y. Martov, Zapiski, p. 14.

²⁵Ibid., 15.

The death of Alexander II was met with great sorrow among the Jews. The minor reforms granted by the Tsar had done little to better conditions in the ghettos, but even a small improvement of their economic and legal status elicited an attitude of gratefulness on the part of the Jews. In the living room of his home, Martov recalled the conversation of his parents and their guests about the assassination and how unfortunate this would be for the Jews.

Another event occurred during Martov's early years which was to impress on his mind that he was a Jew and the object of a seemingly unreal but terrifying persecution. This was the Odessa pogrom of 1881. Martov writes:

The news that, as Jews, we were candidates for some sort of pogrom and threatened with injury did not easily find room in my consciousness. I don't remember whether I asked my elders for the causes of this event. Most likely I did not, because in general, I asked very little and attempted to think everything out for myself until I arrived at some satisfactory answer.²⁶

Street by street the mob stormed the houses and shops of the Jews, pillaging, destroying, killing. The servants begged Martov's mother to allow them to hang ikons in the windows and to paint crosses on the mirrors in hopes the house would be passed. She refused. Before the mob reached the Tsederbaum home the police arrived at the scene and the pogrom never hit the house.

Martov never forgot this incident. He describes how months later, when the family was on the way to St. Petersburg to

²⁶y. Martov, Zapiski, p. 27.

join their father, an old Jew on the train related the horrible scene of a pogrom in Elizabethgrad and he remembered his own experience.²⁷ Years later these same events were to flood his consciousness with the fact that he was, "despite my Russian ideas, manners, and speech, a member of that oppressed minority--the Jew."²⁸

In St. Petersburg, Martov was enrolled in one of the ten gymnasiums of that city. Because of an unusually high enrollment that year he was forced to enter a gymnasium that was noted for its prejudice against the Jews. As Martov later noted:

We, the few Jewish students, were confronted on all sides by a spontaneous view of ourselves as an "inferior" race rather than with anti-Semitic hatred. The others, sons of petty bourgeois Jews, carried this burden passively and attempted to survive unnoticed.

I, who had been brought up in a Russified and liberal milieu, was incapable of surrendering without a struggle. Acerbated by the whole order of school life, my sensitiveness became a disease.²⁹

After several unpleasant incidents at school, Martov came to realize that his struggle against irrational, brutal prejudice was a losing battle. Jewishness became a weakness that he would never be able to overcome.

These experiences tended to draw Martov into a shell. His world became a world of fantasy, a world divorced from

²⁷Y. Martov, Zapiski, p. 19.

²⁸Ibid., p. 27.

²⁹Ibid., p. 26-27.

reality. Martov turned to literature. In addition to the books of Jules Verne which he avidly read, Martov also read various works by Turgenev, Lermontov, Schiller, Hugo, George Sand, Dickens, Shakespeare, Tolstoi and Dostoyevsky.³⁰ By the time he was fourteen, Martov was introduced to the literature of the revolutionary intelligentsia. In his father's library he read Alexander Herzen's memoirs and tales about the Narodovolsti.³¹ He would listen as a circle of his father's friends from the "democratic intelligentsia" met at their house to discuss autocracy and political freedom.

During the reign of Alexander III only a few Jews of high social status were allowed to live in St. Petersburg. The Tsederbaums apparently were legally entitled to reside there because of the father's degree from a university. In 1889 when the family attempted to return to St. Petersburg after a years stay in Tsarakoe Selo, this right was temporarily revoked by the police. Once again Martov was reminded that even the life of a privileged Jew could be filled with anxieties and fears of repression.

After several months of waiting, the Tsederbaums received a reprieve and Yuri was allowed to enter a Petersburg gymnasium. Martov records his delight with his new surroundings.

³⁰Y. Martov, Zapiski, p. 33.

³¹Ibid., p. 31. The Narodovoltsi were members of the Populist party Narodnaya Volya (Peoples Will) which broke away from the Land and Liberty Party in 1879. In Russian the word Volya means both Will and Freedom.

Many of the students were from intelligentsia families. For the first time in his life Martov could not only associate with youths who held the same ideas and values as he, but also found that they welcomed him into their ranks. A bad knee which had prevented him from playing with his fellow students before did not matter now. His new companions were not interested in childish games.³²

Martov and his friends spent most of their time discussing how they could contribute to the revolutionary movement. The radical university students became their heroes, the few illegal revolutionary pamphlets which they obtained became their guide. Within this atmosphere, Martov's revolutionary ideas began to jell. He now began to make his plans for a revolutionary career. Histories of the French Revolution, the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 were discussed in terms of the Russia of their day. Danton and Robespierre, Blanc and Lamartine were seen as liberators of Jew and Russian.³³

The following spring Martov was introduced into the revolutionary camp. A liberal writer by the name of Shelgunov had died and, as Yuri suspected, a number of university students and a few radical workers gathered to conduct a demonstration. Martov and several of his young comrades slipped out of school to attend the ceremonies. As the procession moved down the street to the cemetery several of the university

³²Y. Martov, Zapiski, p. 35.

³³Ibid., p. 48.

students attempted to force the young boys to go home to their "parents coat-tails" by reminding them of the risks involved. Rumors that government spies with photographic equipment were taking their pictures, and that recognition might mean they would be prevented from entering a university did not deter Martov. In his memoirs Martov wrote how this first taste of revolutionary activity became identified with the attainment of adulthood.³⁴

At the University of St. Petersburg, where he enrolled in 1891, Martov was ready to begin what he considered to be a real revolutionary career. Immediately he and several comrades organized a study circle where they discussed "every book they could find that had even the vaguest reference to socialism."³⁵ N. D. Sokolov, an older student already noted for his revolutionary activities, took the group under his guidance.

While his friends studiously pored over the "weighty scientific tomes" and concerned themselves with the "important questions about the historical role of the proletariat in Russia and the special features of the historical process in Russia," Martov had more romantic ideas. He writes:

As an impassioned reciter of everything that was possible to get from the history of revolutions, I found the ideal revolutionary in Robespierre and St. Just--all of whose works I knew well. A simple but

³⁴y. Martov, Zapiski, p. 61.

³⁵Ibid., p. 64.

satisfactory result of this enthusiasm was a primitive Blanquist conception of revolution as the triumph of abstract principles of popular power valid for all times....³⁶

This same romantic spirit can be found in his first literary effort, an introduction to an illegal publication. Quotations from Robespierre and Saint Just filled its pages. As Martov was to admit later: "[it] was completely deprived of moderation and accuracy."³⁷

Yuri's romanticism can be seen again in his expectation of an immediate peasant revolt and in his proposal to create a revolutionary organization which would direct the Petersburg workers and soldiers in an uprising to coincide with the peasants march on the capital.³⁸ It can be seen in his reaction to his first arrest and interrogation by the police:

Seeing myself in an old-fashioned coach, between two of the most real gendarmes, I finally experienced, so to say, an aesthetic satisfaction. One cannot be eighteen and not feel a need for a romantic context for the serious situations in life.³⁹

Taken out of context this remantic spirit--this expression of a genuine devotion to abstract ideals--does not appear to be very significant. As Martov said, from an eighteen-year-old, this is to be expected. The fact is, however, that Martov retained this idealistic conception of the world. Even

³⁶Y. Martov, Zapiski, p. 93-94.

³⁷Ibid., p. 95.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 100-102.

³⁹Ibid., p. 109.

though he would outgrow his youthful day dreams of a popular uprising of the poor Russian peasant or the persecuted Jew, Martov would never adopt the hard cold realism which was so characteristic of his revolutionary companions. Leonard Shapiro, commenting on the differences in personality between Martov and Lenin, concluded:

...Where Lenin could subordinate everything to this one end [the revolution], Martov could never emancipate himself from his innate moral canon. Lenin could veer, prevaricate, intrigue and sow confusion, seeking support from the devil himself if offered.... Martov [was] a prisoner of standards of behaviour and of principles which he never thought of compromising.⁴⁰

The peasant uprising predicted by Martov did occur. It was not a revolt against the landowner nor the government, but against those members of the intelligentsia who had been sent to help the peasant.⁴¹ Disillusioned, Martov turned to Marxism. Russia's problems could not be solved by "going to the people," but only by an emphasis placed on the mission of the workers' party to fight for civil and political freedom.

⁴⁰Leonard Shapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1959), pp. 25-26.

⁴¹The Narodnik policy of "going to the people" was not always greeted with the kind of enthusiasm received by our present Peace Corps. In the early 1890's a cholera epidemic was raging in Southeast Russia. The helpless peasants decided that the Narodnik doctors and nurses who were inoculating them were actually trying to infect them. Many of these doctors and veterinarians were killed. Leopold H. Haimson, The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 68.

In addition to the gigantic Marxian classic, Das Kapital, Martov and his study circle read those works of Plekhanov and Akselrod that were smuggled into Russia from abroad.⁴²

In spite of the severe crackdown on revolutionary activities during the reign of Alexander III, there were still many social democratic circles in Russia--especially in the industrial centers. The purpose of these groups, led by the revolutionary intelligentsia, was to prepare the workers intellectually for the coming political struggle. In addition to the popular socialist literature that could be obtained without too much difficulty, these circles generally studied such subjects as history, geography, mathematics, and the natural sciences. As one might suspect only a limited number of workers were either capable or interested in this type of activity.⁴³

The question arose in Martov's group then, as to how they might further the cause of social democracy. Rather than limit their activities to the more advanced workers, Martov had more ambitious plans:

We instinctively felt that circle propaganda alone threatened to leave Marxism out of the main current of the revolutionary movement and that it should be supplemented by some sort of work designed to spread our ideas more widely among the working class and to exercise political influence over a democratic circles, which were in a state of fermentation.

⁴²Y. Martov, Zapiski, p. 121.

⁴³Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, II, 131.

We came to the conclusion that to simply offer our services as propagandists to a Petersburg Social Democratic group--which had appeared, even to us, as the most natural thing to do--would be unreasonable. Instead of this came the idea of providing propaganda ourselves by the publication of a series of pamphlets and thereby...aiding in the establishment of ties between Petersburg and other cities in which there were labor circles, on the one hand--and on the other, influencing circles of young students, and in general those milieus in which the battle between Marxism and the Narodnichestvo was raging. We hoped thereby to strengthen the cadres of Social Democracy.⁴⁴

A few months after the Petersburg group began its operations, Martov was forced to return to prison to serve the remainder of the sentence for his previous offense. Six difficult months passed before he was released. Even then his release stipulated that for two years he was to remain in exile from St. Petersburg and other university cities. Martov decided to spend those two years (1893-1895) at Vilno to work with the Jewish labor organizations already founded in this highly industrialized city.

⁴⁴Y. Martov, Zapiski, p. 148.

CHAPTER II

OB AGITATSIA, THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

Martov's experience at Vilno was to have a long lasting, if not permanent, effect on his revolutionary career. By working with the Jewish proletariat in their struggle against the intolerable conditions of life in the Pale of Settlement, Martov was not only reminded of his Jewish background but was to adopt a characteristically Jewish response to the demands of reality. Within the framework of the "consciousness" and "spontaneity" categories, Martov was to express this Jewish experience. It became the basis for his program for social democracy.

Shortly after Martov arrived at Vilno he became engaged in the activities of the local social democratic organization. Most of his new associates were from assimilated intelligentsia families. Consequently in the propaganda of these Vilno circles there was nothing that distinguished the Jewish circles from the non-Jewish circles.¹ Specifically Jewish problems were not discussed and the language of the propaganda was Russian. Martov's view of the role of the Jew in emancipation can be seen in the following address presented in Vilno:

¹Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, II, 143. Leonard Shapiro points out that it was by accident rather than design that the Jewish intelligentsia worked among the Jewish workers instead of the Russian workers. This would be true in the case of Martov, who, had he not been exiled, probably never would have gone to Vilno. Leonard Shapiro, "The Role of the Jews," p. 156.

We dare not sit with folded hands and wait for assistance from above. We shall be saved and emancipated only through our own efforts. As far as possible each should seek to educate himself and others and thus contribute toward the formation of at least small socialist groups, for the time being. Through these circles we shall be able to become members of the great universal struggling workers' party which acting in unison will achieve its human rights. Then shall be inaugurated genuine freedom, fraternity, and equality for all mankind, Jews not excluded.²

Although Martov's ideas were later to become altered in some respects, the crux of this discussion of the Jewish influence on Martov's revolutionary world view is his belief that emancipation must come about through identification with, if not participation in, the emancipation of the "universal struggling workers," in other words, through a revolution.

Yuri was invited to head a study circle of garment workers by the local Vilno organization. Before long he became one of the leading figures in the Jewish labor movement.

In the preceeding year, 1892, a series of strikes had broken out involving the Jewish workers in Vilno. The results were, in most cases, favorable to the workers. The Vilno social democrats, however, had done very little in promoting or leading this "spontaneous" strike wave.³ Martov's analysis of these strikes resulted in some very important changes in the tactics of the social democrats. Rather than concentrate on passing as many workers as possible through the study

²M. Rafes, Ocherki po Istorii Bunda, p. 26.

³Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 224. See also Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 2nd ed., VIII, col. 97.

circles, he urged that agitation be carried out among the mass of workers. This agitation emphasized the very thing that had caused the 1892 strikes--dissatisfaction with the immediate economic problems of the workers. In his memoirs Martov writes:

We decided that the center of our activity should be transferred to the sphere of agitation and that all propaganda and organizational work should be subordinated to this basic task. By this was implied agitation on the basis of the day-to-day economic needs of the laboring masses which brought the proletariat into conflict with its employers. There was no talk of agitation on the basis of other social interests...or on the basis of cultural questions, because we instinctively followed the path of least psychological resistance. We took the average worker as he was at that time, limited to a local and shop view, failing to bridge the gap separating this view from the social life of other classes.

But we were convinced that once they were drawn into a social struggle on the basis of these day-to-day economic interests, the masses would be prepared by the very process of this struggle to assimilate wider social and political strivings and thus put into contact with other classes, brought to self-definition in relation to them. Therefore, we didn't doubt in the least that by this new path we would arrive at the formation of a social democratic labor movement.⁴

Martov's ideas were not greeted with much enthusiasm among the young workers already in the circles. For these workers the educational program of the study group was their only opportunity for intellectual development. "The thought," wrote Martov, "that the circle would now consist primarily of agitators and that the subject matter taken up by their circles would be calculated to prepare the students for activity among the masses was entirely unacceptable to the greater part

⁴Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, pp. 225-226.

of the working youth."⁵

Martov's supporters, on the other hand, sensed the opportunity offered by the mass economic struggle of the workers and decided to change the tactics of the organization so as to adapt them to the new situation.

On May 1, 1895 Martov delivered an address, later published as a pamphlet under the title: "A Turning Point in the Jewish Labor Movement", which was to become an important document in Russian-Jewish socialist literature. Martov's argument was that the success of socialism was due to the introduction of democratic and economic elements into the movement. He went on to point out that the hope of socialism in the future would rest on the solution it provides for the needs of the masses, and that the economic struggle of the worker would naturally lead him to battle eventually for political freedom.⁶

Most important, Martov's May Day speech urged the organization of a special Jewish workingmans' party. This was the first time in a public speech that a social democrat made any distinction between the needs of the Jewish worker and the Russian worker.⁷ Martov also suggested that the language spoken and written by the propagandist be changed

⁵Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 227.

⁶Yuri Osipovich Martov, Povorotnyi Punkt v Istorii Evreiskago Rabochago Dvizheniya (Geneva: Izdatel'stvo Bunda, 1900), p. 3.

⁷Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, II, 146.

from Russian to Yiddish--the only language understood by the masses of Jewish workers.⁸

Many statements in this speech appear to be contradictory to his previously stated position that Jewish emancipation could only take place by identification with the Russian proletariat. For example: "The Jewish proletariat should not depend on the Russian or Polish working class for its liberation, but in compliance with the democratic slogan 'through the efforts of the people themselves,' work for their redemption as Jews."⁹ In Martov's view, the indifference of the Jewish masses to the "fate of their nation" was a handicap to their development of a class consciousness. "If a people are not willing to battle for its proper status as a nation," he said, "neither would it attempt to rise from its inferior class status.... National consciousness must go hand in hand with the awakening of class consciousness."¹⁰

The apparent contradiction lies in his definition of national consciousness and outright nationalism--which he

⁸y. Martov, Povorotnyi Punkt v Istorii, p. 10

⁹Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 10. Martov then advocated a specifically Jewish Party on the grounds that if at any time in the future the Russian proletariat were forced to sacrifice some of its party demands, it would most likely be "demands which exclusively concern the Jews, such as freedom of religion or equality of civil rights for Jews."

detested. As Martov concluded in his speech: "We can boldly stress the specific Jewish character of our movement without running the risk of turning aside from the universal workers' movement in general and the Russian in particular."¹¹

Martov's May Day speech is generally considered to be one of the documents which laid the foundation for the General Jewish Workingmen's Party of Russia, Poland, and Lithuania--the Bund as it came to be called.¹²

Strikes conducted by Jewish workers and the development of special strike funds helped create a strong Jewish labor movement.¹³ In 1897 socialist leaders throughout the Pale of Settlement felt that the time was ripe for a unification of the various Jewish social democratic organizations into a single party. At a conference held at Vilno the Bund was founded.

By virtue of the fact that the Jewish socialists had emphasized mass agitation, thus incorporating a wide network of workers and organizations, the Bund became a mass party. For example: in 1904-5 the Bund's membership reached 40,000

¹¹Y. Martov, Povorotnyi Punkt v Istorii, p. 10.

¹²"The Bund," The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia (New York, 1948), II, 587. See also M. Rafes, Ocherki po Istorii Bunda, p. 30.

¹³Ibid. The Strikes were held in Vilno and Bialstok in 1891; Vilno, 1892; Warsaw 1893; Bialstok, Minsh, and Vilno, 1895.

while the Russian party committees numbered only 8,400.¹⁴

The Bund, although it was a Jewish organization, always regarded itself as part of the Social Democratic Party. The executive committee of the Bund gave essential aid to the organization of the First Party Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1898 and became a constituent member of that party though it demanded autonomy in strictly Jewish matters.¹⁵

The Bundists engaged in the economic struggle but also maintained political aims. In 1900, at the Third Convention of the Bund, an extensive campaign against the government, featured by public demonstrations, was planned. The government reacted by arresting and deporting many of the leaders, but the Bund was still the only Jewish organization actively engaged in revolutionary activities.¹⁶

Martov supported the Bundist movement during his prison term and immediately after his return to St. Petersburg in

¹⁴"The Bund," The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, II, 588. cf. Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, VIII, col. 98; XI, col. 531. The Bol'shaya gives the figures for the same period as 23,000 members in the Bund and 8,400 in the entire Russian party.

¹⁵Leopold H. Haimson, The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 72. Martov alludes to this in his memoirs by saying that the demand for autonomy in Jewish affairs was a natural development that followed from the climate of opinion over his May Day speech: V mae 1895 goda etta ideya lish' brodila v vozdukh v nashikh krugakh, Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 245.

¹⁶Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, p. 145.

1900.¹⁷ In 1901, however, the Bundist movement reached a turning point. At the Fourth Convention in Bialstok, the Bund expressed itself on the question of Jewish Nationalism. The convention pronounced itself in favor of a Russian state based on a federation of nationalities in which the Jews would become a constituent part. Martov opposed the declaration of the Bundist convention claiming that the whole idea was "bourgeois."¹⁸ But the assimilationist policy of the majority of Jewish intellectuals was overridden by the non-intelligentsia section of the Bund.

The democratic basis of the Jewish labor movement was one of the features that Martov had always admired.¹⁹ Yet it would seem that it was this feature which brought about the collapse of the Jewish Bund after the Revolution of 1905. The Bundist intelligentsia, out-maneuvered and out-voted in subsequent conventions, began to drift away from the Bund. The majority of its leadership as well as its membership after 1905 was composed of laborers.²⁰ This was reflected in the increasingly Jewish program of the Bund which began to use Yiddish exclusively at their conventions. The resolutions adopted were all on internal Jewish matters: the recognition of Yiddish as the national language of the Jews,

¹⁷Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 249.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 250.

¹⁹Ante, p. 27.

²⁰"The Bund," The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, II, 599.

a demand for the employment of Yiddish in Jewish schools and institutions, and an insistence to observe the Jewish Sabbath instead of resting on Sunday.²¹ By isolating themselves from the intelligentsia and the theoretical and organizational framework of the Russian movement, the Bund was ineffective. After 1917, threatened with repression by the Bolsheviks, the Bund ceased to exist.

The principal difference in the development of the Jewish social democratic movement and the Russian movement after 1894 was the success the Jews had in passing from propaganda to agitation. Plekhanov had differentiated between these two terms when he wrote: "The propagandist presents many ideas to one individual, or to several individuals. The agitator presents one idea only, or a few ideas, but he presents them to a whole mass of persons...."²² By emphasizing the "spontaneous" economic struggle the Jewish agitators had succeeded while the Russian propagandists often were isolated from the workers.

Martov was undoubtedly influenced by this success, and though he later stressed the need for party supervision of the workers' spontaneous outbursts, he consistently leaned toward the Jewish approach.

These two opposite revolutionary tactics--agitation to

²¹"The Bund," The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, II, 599.

²²Leonard Shapiro, The Communist Party, p. 23.

produce a spontaneous revolt on the part of the worker to better his economic conditions, and propaganda to educate the worker to a class consciousness that would lead him to political opposition--produced much of the debate among the revolutionary intelligentsia in Russia until the revolution of 1905. Those who supported the concept of agitation were confident that the proletariat would grow into conscious social democrats because of their experience in the economic struggle. Those who favored the propaganda idea argued that the workers would never become social democrats, that they may be successful from time to time in bettering their working conditions, but they would forever remain an oppressed class in a bourgeois state.²³ Instead, argued the propagandist, the social democratic party must lead a class conscious proletariat in a revolution against absolutism.

Martov's answer to this conflict may be expressed as a synthesis of both approaches. In his first actual publication, a historical foreword to a speech by Jules Guesde, Yuri presented a dialectical interpretation of the evolution of Russian revolutionary thought.²⁴ In his memoirs, Martov

²³This interpretation of the necessity of the propagandist approach was fostered by Plekhanov and Lenin and was very popular among the "politiki." For an explicit statement of this position see V. Lenin, "What is to be Done," Selected Works (18 vols.; New York: International Publishers, 1943), II, 29.

²⁴Martov's first literary endeavor (ante, p. 20) was not published because his comrades objected to its demagogical character. Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 25.

outlined his earlier attempt to combine the revolutionary energy of the proletariat with the consciousness process. The Narodnichestvo of the 1870's, Martov contended, was the thesis of this dialectical pattern. That movement had been based on the idea of a popular uprising leading to a social revolution. The Narodnaya Volya represented the antithesis. Its program was to bring about a political revolution without the aid of the masses. This revolution would be achieved through the efforts of a "critically thinking" intelligentsia. The resulting synthesis was social democracy, which aimed at a social revolution through a "conscious working class."²⁵

What Martov meant by a "conscious working class" became evident in a pamphlet entitled Ob Agitatsia (On Agitation). Martov collaborated with Arkady Kremer, a leading Jewish social democrat in Vilno, on an analysis of the successful experience of the Jewish workers in the economic struggle. Kremer, who was later to be one of the founders of the Jewish Bund, outlined this analysis in Ob Agitatsia while Martov edited and supplied a preface to the pamphlet.

Until 1894 the Marxists in Russia had confined their activity to the formation of circles that were hardly distinguishable from their Populist predecessors.²⁶ After the

²⁵Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 158. It was with this publication that Yuri assumed the name Martov.

²⁶Henry J. Tobias, "The Bund and Lenin until 1903," The Russian Review, XX (October 1961), 345.

Martov-Kremer essay was smuggled into St. Petersburg and other parts of the empire, the whole character of the revolutionary movement was to change. The social democrates began to shift to agitation.

Martov and Kremer argued that the primary concern of the masses was to obtain political power. But, they said: "The masses of people are drawn into battle not by theoretic arguments but by the concrete logic of things, by the natural course of events which forces them in the struggle."²⁷ The daily economic struggle had taught the worker (the Jewish worker) the need for political power, for he saw how an unsympathetic government could block his plans for economic improvement through the use of anti-labor legislation and police brutality. Agitation then, was to be based on the daily needs of the proletariat and lead, from specific grievances to mass strikes, and from mass strikes to the organization of a vast labor organization which would be strong enough to carry out a successful revolution against the autocracy.²⁸

The need for a social democratic party to assist in the development of a proletarian class consciousness and provide leadership in the political struggle was established as a necessity in Ob Agitatsia, but the ultimate goal of

²⁷Arkady Kremer, Ob Agitatsia, ed. Y. Martov (Geneva: Izdatel'stvo Bunda, 1898), p. 2.

²⁸Ibid., p. 8.

emancipation was to be achieved through the spontaneous uprising of the people. This is seen in the conclusion of the pamphlet:

The struggle incited by this agitation will teach the workers to defend their interests; it will raise their fortitude; it will give them a confidence in their forces, a consciousness of the indispensability of unity and confront them in the end with the more important questions which require resolution. Prepared in this way for a more serious struggle, the working class will proceed to the solution of its basic problems.²⁹

Ob Agitatsia can be viewed as the originator of the "stages theory;" the proletariat will turn to political action when the "economic struggle will have made clear to it [the proletariat] the impossibility of obtaining any improvement in the existing political conditions."³⁰ It was this "stages theory" which the Economists advanced to justify their tactics.

The Economist controversy provides an interesting approach in the examination of Martov's views of the revolutionary movement from 1895 to 1903. If "spontaneity"--the Jewish experience--was so important in Martov's scheme why did he oppose the Economists whose program was based on the very principles sketched in Ob Agitatsia? To answer this important question it is necessary to explore the Economist movement.

In the spring of 1895 Martov was allowed to return to

²⁹Arkady Kremer, Ob Agitatsia, p. 21.

³⁰Ibid., p. 13.

St. Petersburg. Fresh from his experience at Vilno he urged the creation of a new social democratic organization. Martov proposed:

the creation of a labor organization founded on agitational circles each of which was to constitute the gathering place for the best spontaneous fermentations at various points of the labor world and the center of agitational activity on them.

By making use of various causes for dissatisfaction, the organization was to formulate and motivate the presentation of demands in every clash between the masses and the employers, and as far as possible, it was to present to the masses proposals of struggle for this or that economic or legal improvement, even before the masses expressed strong dissatisfaction.³¹

Along the lines that Martov had suggested, a new all-Petersburg organization was formed: the Petersburg Union for the Emancipation of Labor (Soyuz Borby za Osvobozhdenie Truda).

Lenin was frankly skeptical that the workers would naturally grow into political consciousness.³² Martov recalls that he was "cold, if not contemptuous" to the proposed Union. "Lenin's background of underground activity," Martov rationalized, "made him secretive not only towards the police but towards the working class also."³³

Martov's program for the Petersburg Union, which in effect exposed the leaders to the dangers of open agitation,

³¹y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 263.

³²Ibid., p. 264.

³³Ibid.

probably helped him understand Lenin's secretiveness. In December 1896, during the first industry-wide strike, the Okhrana had little trouble in capturing the leaders of the group. Lenin and Martov, along with the remaining leaders, were arrested, sent to prison, and later exiled to Siberia. Martov was sent to Turukhansk and was not released until the winter of 1900.³⁴

During the absence of Lenin and Martov, the Petersburg group was run by the younger social democrats who had so enthusiastically endorsed Martov's draft of tactics. Early in 1897 another strike in the textile industry successfully reduced the working hours to eleven-and-a-half per day.³⁵ The response of the workers to agitation on the basis of concrete, intelligible demands seemed to be proof that the policies in Ob Agitatsia were sound.

Like the Jewish movement in Vilno the Petersburg Union was rapidly developing into a mass movement. The Union was also becoming more democratic as the rank and file party members had acquired a special prominence with the new

³⁴Martov had a difficult time at Turukhansk. He was not only isolated from the developments in the revolutionary movement except for a few reports that filtered through, but also suffered a mental strain that caused two nervous breakdowns in that Siberian episode. Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 371-376.

³⁵A law was passed in June, 1897 fixing the working day for adults at eleven-and-a-half hours. L. Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, p. 148.

emphasis on agitation.

A new labor journal, Rabochaya Mysl, was formed to give voice to the growing preoccupation with the economic struggle. Rabochaya Mysl, although some of its members were from the intelligentsia, was dominated by the factory agitators and propagandists. Haimson, in his analysis of the Economist controversy, emphasized the trend away from the political struggle that followed the success of the strikes. He cites the manifesto of the journal to demonstrate this point:

The economic struggle, the struggle against capital on the grounds of day-to-day basic interests, strikes as the instruments of this struggle--this is the motto of the labor movement....Let the workers conduct this struggle, knowing that they are fighting not for some future generation but for themselves and their children; let them understand that each victory, every inch seized from the enemy, is one more step climbed on the stairway leading to their own welfare; let the existing forces call the weak to the struggle and place them in their own ranks, without counting on any external aid. Victory is ahead but the upper hand will be held by the fighters only if their motto is: 'the workers for the workers.'³⁶

It follows from this statement of policy that if social democracy had become the expression of the working class in the economic struggle, its leadership should be composed of the workers.

While Martov had not objected to democracy in the Jewish organizations and had even praised it, he tended to side with Lenin against the proposed change in the organizational structure of the Petersburg Union. As he wrote in his

³⁶Leopold Haimson, The Russian Marxists, p. 79.

memoirs:

Insofar as the day-to-day practice of the Union had previously consisted of the leadership of the workers' professional struggle, the proposed organization would cramp these leading ranks in all attempts to widen the scope of their revolutionary work and to take it out of the wrapping of the purely trade-union struggle....[Since] we considered the concentration of the strength of the party on the latter as just a strategic scheme, leading by the surest path to a direct struggle against absolutism, we greeted the project with skepticism and supported Ulyanov.³⁷

Martov's support of Lenin on this issue was not to be important until 1900. Meanwhile the two leaders could do nothing but wait and watch from their Siberian outposts as the Economist movement gathered momentum.

While in St. Petersburg and other cities the social democratic organizations were following the "path of least resistance," Plekhanov and Aksel'rod in Geneva were preparing for the First Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party. According to these great theoreticians of Russian Marxism, the new all-Russian party was to be founded on the Marxist idea that the workers should cooperate with the more advanced liberal bourgeoisie and peasants to bring about the downfall of the autocracy.³⁸ Their program, in other words, was based on the primacy of political demands over economic demands.

³⁷Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, pp. 316-317.

³⁸Bertram D. Wolfe, Three Who Made a Revolution (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), p. 93.

Almost immediately Plekhanov and Aksel'rod were confronted with the demands of the younger revolutionaries who favored the economic struggle. It was obvious to Plekhanov, however, that the economic struggle could not lead to the overthrow of absolutism.³⁹ Even though, as Martov had hoped, the experience of the workers in the economic struggle had led toward a rise in the class consciousness of the proletariat in St. Petersburg, and had even led to conflicts with the government which had sided with the employers during the strikes, Plekhanov remained unconvinced that the workers could, without the aid of the other advanced parties of Russia, successfully overthrow the government.⁴⁰

This conflict abroad resulted in the formation of a splinter party called the Union of Russian Social Democrats. Its leaders, V. Akimov, B. Krichevski, and A. Martynov became known as Economists. Around their new journal, Rabochee Delo developed the center of the Economist movement.

For the most part, the Economists represented the extreme of the position that the workers should concentrate on improving their economic conditions. It should be noted that this "extremist position," as Lenin called it, was not held by everyone in the Economist camp. The more moderate Economists based their tactics on Ob Agitatsia, but even the

³⁹Bertram D. Wolfe, Three Who Made a Revolution, p. 93.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 94.

most radical members of the group did not deny the need for a political struggle.⁴¹

Martov, still in Turukhansk, was not aware of the seriousness of the growing conflict in the party between the Economists and the Politiki (advocators of the political struggle). It was not until 1899 when several reports were smuggled into Turukhansk that Martov realized the danger of the dispute.⁴² Among these papers was a pamphlet entitled: Credo. The Credo was one of the most radical statements made by the Economists. E. D. Kuskova, author of this anti-orthodox manifesto, advocated a revision of the Marxist political program drawn up by the Social Democratic Party hierarchy. The Credo declared:

We hope that intolerant, negating, and primitive Marxism which unduly stresses and exaggerates the class character of society will become more democratic in its conception and will radically revise its attitude toward society as a whole....The Social Democratic party should emerge from its narrow sectarian interests and dedicate itself to reforming contemporary society along democratic lines and to the defense of all working classes.⁴³

The Credo went on to say that while "political exclusivism" was justified in Western Europe where all classes had achieved a class consciousness, it could not work in Russia, "where only participation in the life advanced by Russian reality, however un-Marxian it might be, [would] shake the Russian citizen out

⁴¹Leopold Haimson, The Russian Marxists, p. 87

⁴²Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 389.

⁴³The Text of the "Credo" is quoted in full in: V. Lenin, Sochineniya, IV, 153-156.

of his political lethargy."⁴⁴

The suggestion in the Credo that the party be dissolved or at least reconstructed with less emphasis on a disciplined control by the party organization deeply disturbed Martov and brought his condemnation of the "inroads of Economism" in the party.⁴⁵

At this point we see Martov as a theoretical progenitor of the Economist position through his program in Ob Agitatsia, but denouncing the Economists for their democratic ideas. While in Siberia and again after his return to St. Petersburg, Martov defended the idea of a strong central party organization. Yet at the Second Party Congress in 1903 he precipitated the party split by demanding a democratic oasis for the party.

One way to explain these apparent contradictions is to say that Martov was a divided man--that he was inconsistent, vacillating, or even confused. Up to a point, this answer would be correct. Both Haimson and Shapiro, eminent historians of the Russian Marxist movement, tend to accept this conclusion.⁴⁶ There is, however, another point to consider:

⁴⁴v. Lenin, Sochineniya, IV, 155.

⁴⁵y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 393.

⁴⁶Haimson writes: "His [Martov's] feelings bent him toward a preference toward the uncontrolled growth of the Social Democratic movement, but his disciplined will hardened in his contact with adverse reality." L. Haimson, The Russian Marxists, p. 74. Shapiro calls it "ironic" that Martov supported one view in 1895 and another in 1902 and concluded that Martov "suffered from some of the indecision which is born of intellectual integrity." L. Shapiro, The Communist Party, p. 26.

What Jewish influence, if any, can be attributed to Martov's stand?

The program of Ob Agitatsia was a synthesis of spontaneity and consciousness. On the basis of the experience of the Jews, Martov concluded that the party would have to provide the leadership in the political struggle. Even though the Economists themselves agreed with these provisions, in reality the Rabochee Delo-ists were moving away from the party. The psychological effect of the spontaneous economic struggle, against the government, amounted to a conviction that the workers could gain concessions only by being strong--that is, by succeeding in more strikes. A strong party therefore, was not necessary. The Economists were, as a result of this experience, very close to the Marxian revisionists who advocated an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary program. Fundamental to Jewish emancipation, in Martov's view, as well as in the views of the vast majority of the Jewish intelligentsia, was the concept of revolution.⁴⁷

The Credo was clearly a revisionist document. It should be noted that the "democracy" it advocated went beyond the demand for democracy within the Social Democratic Party. "Credo democracy" meant the participation of the parties of the proletariat with all advanced liberal parties in an all-Russian liberal organization. Plekhanov and Aksel'rod did

⁴⁷Ante, p. 10.

not oppose this idea as long as the Social Democratic party acted as the leader. Martov, however, was violently opposed to any organization where the bourgeoisie intermingled in the affairs of the working class movement. Consider this statement written in 1901:

The struggle between the "critics" and "orthodox" Marxists is really the first chapter of a struggle for political hegemony between the proletariat and bourgeois democracy. In the uprising of the bourgeois intelligentsia against proletarian hegemony, we see, hidden under an ideological mask, the class struggle of the advanced section of bourgeois society against the revolutionary proletariat....

The Economists are attempting to turn the proletariat into an instrument of the bourgeoisie. By restricting it to the immediate economic struggle, they are preventing it from developing its own political program, from becoming an independent political force, and consequently from entering into conflicts with the liberals.⁴⁸

This is a very strong indictment. Taking into consideration the emphasis Martov placed in his memoirs on his study of the history of revolutions--particularly the French Revolution, and the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848--Martov's fear of the bourgeoisie becomes more clear. Each of these revolutions resulted in a triumph of the bourgeoisie over the demands of their co-revolutionists, the European proletariat. The Jew, therefore, would never be emancipated in a bourgeois state. At Vilno Martov had repeatedly accused the government of being agents of the bourgeoisie.⁴⁹ The "universal struggling

⁴⁸Yuri Osipovich Martov, "Vsegda v Men'shinstve. O Sovremennykh Zadachakh Russkoi Sotsialisticheskoi Intelligentsia," *Zarya*, no. 2-3 (December 1901), 190-191.

⁴⁹Y. Martov, *Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata*, pp. 223, 228, 234.

workers," which included the Jewish proletariat, could only be emancipated through their own revolution.

Martov's response to the Economist-Revisionist movement would have seemed irrational in 1895. During the 1900's however, Russian had witnessed the political awakening of the liberal bourgeoisie. In 1899, 1900, and 1901 university students all over Russia went on strikes and held demonstrations.⁵⁰ In Moscow, Kharkov, St. Petersburg, and Kazan bourgeois elements joined the demonstrations, demanding political freedom for all society.⁵¹ Liberal bourgeois members of the zemstvo organizations were beginning to express similar demands.⁵² While Martov was apprehensive about a bourgeois hegemony on the activities of the proletariat, P. B. Struve campaigned for an increase in the activities of the bourgeoisie. A former Marxist, Struve now became one of the strongest opponents of social democracy during this critical period.⁵³ The publication of the Credo, with its demands for

⁵⁰Michael Florinsky, Russia, a History and an Interpretation, (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan Company, 1958), II. 1165-1166.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 1166-1167.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 1167-1168.

⁵³Arthur P. Mendel, Dilemmas of Progress in Tsarist Russia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 166. Struve eagerly adopted the program of the German Socialist Eduard Bernstein. In his Premises of Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy, Bernstein dismissed the Marxian arguments of Surplus Value, the Class Struggle, the Iron Law of Wages, and in general the spirit of revolution. Bernstein's argument was that society was gradually moving toward socialism, that

a re-examination of the party's attitudes toward other classes in Russia, attracted Struve to the Economists. He had long insisted that the re-organization of Russian life was more important than class interests. Russia, according to Struve, could only be transformed by the "creative elements of Russian society."⁵⁴

Struve thus became the link between the Economists and the Revisionists. It was this association, more than any other single factor, that brought Martov into such violent opposition to the Economist movement.

Martov was not alone in his argument that the evolutionary theories of the Revisionists could not liberate Russia from the autocracy. As the Revisionist-Economist attacks on Marxian orthodoxy continued, the opposition led by Lenin, Martov, Plekhanov, and Aksel'rod tended to solidify. Martov came to embrace Lenin's solution that a strong party leadership was necessary to combat the danger at hand.

this was a healthy movement, and that the Marxists were therefore out of touch with reality. They were basing their program on a mid-nineteenth century idea that no longer corresponded to the actual course of events. Struve then became the leader of the "critics" who attempted to reform the misdirected "orthodox." The Economists, particularly the extremists, hoped to reform the "orthodox" as well. Kuskova and Krichevsky, by opposing the foundations of social democracy in their rejection of an independent and exclusive workers party and in their attempts to place the economic struggle in an evolutionary framework, made the clash between the Economist-Revisionist disciples and the orthodox inevitable.

⁵⁴Arthur Mendel, Dilemmas of Progress, p. 173.

The differences in viewpoints between Lenin and Martov-- differences that ultimately resulted in the Bolshevik-Menshevik split--were not as yet clearly drawn. Martov did not ask what Lenin meant when he talked about a "strong" leadership. Martov did not then evaluate the Economist charge that Lenin's plans for social democracy rested on an "exclusivism" of the party leadership. The primary task of the orthodox Marxists was to restore party unity, to bring the errant Economists back into line. It was on this principle that Iskra was born.

CHAPTER III

ISKRA AND THE SECOND CONGRESS

Historians have given considerable attention to the newspaper Iskra and its attempt to restore party unity by creating a strong nationwide party organization. In this discussion, the Iskra period, 1900-1903, will be examined in an effort to arrive at some conclusions concerning the basis for the split that was to occur at the Second Party Congress in 1903. This thesis will argue that despite the semblance of unity there were certain important differences between Martov's revolutionary world view and the views of his colleagues. It will attempt to show that Martov was pursuing a course that was consistent with the general aims of the Jewish revolutionary movement.

The idea of establishing a political newspaper to unite the cadres of social democracy probably occurred to Lenin long before he began making preparations in 1899 during his exile to Siberia. Martov had received several letters from Lenin with vague references to the establishment of an all-Russian social democratic organ,¹ but until 1900, after his return from Turukhansk, Martov knew only that some sort of journalistic enterprise was being planned in which he, Lenin, Potresov, Plhekhanoy, and Aksel'rod were to take part.²

¹Elizabeth Hill and Doris Munie (eds.), Letters of Lenin (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1937), p. 105-107.

²Y. Martov, Zapiski Sotsial Demokrata, p. 412.

During the early months of Iskra's existence Martov had every reason to believe that he and Lenin had interpreted the history of the revolutionary movement in much the same way. Consider Lenin's essay in the first issue of Iskra, "Urgent Tasks of our Movement:"

In our opinion, three circumstances have prepared the ground for this sad state of affairs [the growth of the Economist-Revisionist movement]. First, in the beginning of their activity, Russian Social Democrats restricted themselves merely to work in propaganda circles. When we took up the work of agitation among the masses we were not always able to restrain ourselves from going to the other extreme. Secondly,... we often had to fight for our right of existence against the Narodovolists, who by "politics" understood activity isolated from the labour movement and who reduced politics exclusively to struggle by means of conspiracies....Thirdly, in working isolatedly, in small, local workers' circles, the Social Democrats did not devote sufficient attention to organizing a revolutionary party....³

Martov could agree with Lenin that propaganda circles alone were not the answer. Martov's Jewish experience had shown the need for a mass movement.⁴ On the second point again there was agreement. The Narodovolists (Narodovoltsi), Martov had written earlier,⁵ had erred in trying to bring about a political revolution through "critically minded people" without the aid of the masses. In Ob Aritatsia Martov's argument on the need for a revolutionary party was

³Vladimir Lenin, "Urgent Tasks of Our Movement," Selected Works, II, 10.

⁴Ante, p. 26.

⁵Ante, p. 34.

similar to Lenin's third point. And what objections could Martov have with the concluding quotation of Lenin's article: "The muscular arms of millions of workers will be raised, and the yoke of despotism, that is guarded by soldiers' bayonets, will be smashed to atoms?"⁶

This first issue of Iskra appeared in December 1900. Plekhanov, Aksel'rod, and Vera Zasulich of the Emancipation of Labor group, and Lenin, Martov, and Potresov representing the Social Democrats in Russia made up the editorial board.

Significantly enough, there were no Economists on the board. In 1900, Lenin, Martov, and Potresov had met with the "kritiki" to discuss the possibilities of representing all factions of the party in Iskra, but primarily because of Martov's objections, no basis for agreement was reached.⁷ At this "Pskov meeting" Struve and another "legal Marxist,"⁸ Tugan-Baranovsky, joined forces with delegates of the Economist Union of Social Democrats Abroad to present offers of collaboration and support of the new organ. Martov was extremely skeptical. Struve, in Martov's opinion, was an agent of the bourgeoisie, who, if the opportunity ever arose,

⁶Vladimir Lenin, "Urgent Tasks of Our Movement," Selected Works, II, 10.

⁷Yuri Osipovich Martov, "Pskov," Leninskii Sbornik (23 vols.; Moscow: Gospolitizad., 1923), IV, 51.

⁸The term "legal Marxism" was derived from the idea of reforming Russia through "legal" channels such as the Zemstvo. Other than that there was nothing legal about it for many legal Marxists participated in underground activities.

would conclude a deal with the autocracy at the expense of the people.⁹ In an account published in 1921, Martov had this to say of the Pskov meeting:

...The representative of the Soyuz [Union of Social Democrats Abroad] asserted that the Soyuz did not stand for Revisionism, for the denial of political tasks, or for the organizational fragmentation of the party, and they attributed the split with Osvobozenie Truda [Lenin and Martov's Petersburg group] to the authoritarian tendencies of Plekhanov and Aksel'rod....

I attributed this step of the Soyuz to political chicanery, resulting from the change in the general awakening of public opinion expressed by the student strikes, which indicated that the political isolation of the workers on the arena of active struggle would soon cease....¹⁰

In the same article Martov expressed his distrust of Struve:

Lenin and Potreseov agreed to carry on our discussions with Struve and his colleagues on the basis of a clear formulation of our own credo in reference to both the struggle against tsarism and the theoretical struggle against Revisionism and reformism....I expressed my doubts as to the possibility of an agreement with the kritiki, if we were not to abandon our open and irrevocable struggle for orthodoxy....I predicted that [in the case an agreement was reached] the agreement would be broken from the very beginning.¹¹

As long as Iskra battled against Economism--against the khovostists, as Lenin called them¹²--Martov gave his full support to the program. He became one of the most prolific

⁹Yuri Osipovich Martov, "Politicheskii Razvrat i Ekonomicheskoe Tupoumie," Leninskii Sbornik, IV, 13.

¹⁰Y. Martov, "Pskov," Leninskii Sbornik, IV, 55.

¹¹Ibid., 59-60.

¹²The Russian word "khovost" means tail in Russian.

writers in the pages of Iskra, denouncing the critics of social democracy and urging all loyal Marxists to follow the guidance of Iskra to victory over absolutism.

It is important, however, to note the nature of Martov's attacks. F. I. Dan, Martov's brother-in-law and a revolutionary of some stature himself, remarked in his political testament that Martov was primarily concerned with the question of Marxian orthodoxy. Dan frankly admitted that Ob Agitatsia had provided the theoretical foundation for the development of Economism and that Martov did not object to the emphasis the Economists placed on the economic struggle, except when used as the "exclusive agent in the struggle of the working class for emancipation."¹³ While Dan's testament was not published until 1946 there seems to be little doubt that his interpretation was correct.

The evidence suggests that Martov saw in Economism a threat to the ultimate emancipation of the worker, and thus to the Jew.

The "guidance" Iskra furnished appeared in the form of answers to problems in Marxian theory, as well as, of answers to problems that confronted the revolutionaries in their day-to-day struggle. Articles explaining, or rather "exposing," the halfhearted liberal opposition, the petty-bourgeois nature of the Socialist Revolutionaries, and the

¹³Fedor I. Dan, Proiskhozhdenie Bol'shevizma k Istorii Demokraticheskikh i Sotsialdemokraticheskikh idei v Rossii Posle Osvobozhdeniya Krestyan (New York: Novaya Demokratiya, 1946), p. 244-245.

international "opportunists" (the Revisionists) were consistent with Martov's view of the role the proletariat should play in the revolutionary movement.

Under Lenin's leadership, however, Iskra also became a militant organizational center for social democracy. At first Martov was not aware of the implications of Lenin's organizational plans. The immediate task of establishing a centralized, all-Russian Social Democratic Party precluded the existence of a loose organization resting on the "free and unhampered development" of the working class, to quote one of Martov's pet phrases. Yet he did not object.

There were two very real reasons for Yuri's acquiescence. In June 1902 Struve published the first issue of a journal, Osvobozhdenie, which was recognized immediately as a menace to social democracy. In 1902 "police socialism," the Zubatovshchina, made its appearance at St. Petersburg.

Osvobozhdenie, according to Struve's plan, was to act as a center for the new liberal movement. It emphasized the reorganization of the state through the zemstva and city assemblies. Struve hoped to build liberal support for his democratization of all Russian society. An editorial in the first issue of Osvobozhdenie demonstrates this new platform:

It would be desirable to leave to existing organs of self-government the right to select deputies not only from...the ranks of the zemstvo and city electors, but also from the whole of Russian society. Such a course is preferable to the jump into the unknown that all attempts at

ad hoc elections would constitute, "Since they would have to cope with inevitable governmental pressures and unpredictable states of mind among social classes unaccustomed to political life."¹⁴

Martov, commenting on the publication of Osvobozhdenie, was even more adamant in his disapprobation of Struve's "conspiracy:"

The constitutionalists [Martov wrote] are attempting to organize the liberal bourgeoisie, not so much to struggle for the overthrow of absolutism, as to prepare for a struggle for the right to rule undividedly over Russia after the victory of the people over absolutism....The aim of Osvobozhdenie is to bring forward the opinion it is organizing with a demand for a constitution at the moment when the government, under the threat of the revolutionary movement, will finally recognize the need for reform.¹⁵

If Martov was disturbed by Osvobozhdenie, he was furious over the successes of the Zubatovshchina. V. S. Zubatov was the chief of the Moscow Okhrana. From the time of his appointment in 1899 until he was dismissed by Pleve in 1903, Zubatov attempted to bring trade unionism under the control of the police.

Moscow was the scene of the first "police union." As Wolfe writes of the Moscow workers:

Assured that a paternal government was with them, they rushed into the strange union. Five days after it was formed, it was able to lead a

¹⁴Cited in L. Haimson, The Russian Marxists, p. 152-153.

¹⁵Y. Martov, "Programma Russkikh Liberalov," Leninski Sbornik, IV, 133-134.

procession of fifty thousand workers into the Kremlin for solemn prayer before the tomb of the Emancipator Tsar, Alexander II.¹⁶

Soon the new unions were mushrooming all over Russia.

The Zubatovshchina was particularly successful amongst the Jewish workers not yet controlled by the Bund. Zubatov's argument that the only reason the police seemed to be against the workers was that, in trying to obtain fairer working conditions, the proletarians were being misdirected--they were attacking the government, not the source of their problems, the employers. Zubatov encouraged the Jewish socialists to drop their anti-governmental protests and concentrate on achieving their economic goals through closely supervised strikes.¹⁷

Many of these Jewish socialists, already under arrest by the police, were won over by Zubatov's program and released. The leader of this group was a woman, Mania Vilbushevich. Under her direction the Independent Jewish Workers Party was formed. After several triumphant strikes, thousands of Jews were drawn into the Independent Party.¹⁸

For Martov, the Zubatovshchina represented a heresy that had to be destroyed. His view that the Jew could only be emancipated by a revolution undoubtedly contributed to

¹⁶Bertram Wolfe, Three Who Made a Revolution, p. 273.

¹⁷Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia, p. 178.

¹⁸Ibid.

his hostility and fear of this "police socialism."

Martov's analysis of the phenomenal growth of the Zubatovshchina was diametrically opposed to Lenin's analysis. In his essay "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," Lenin cited the traitorous socialists in the Independent Jewish Party as an example of what happens when the party cadres are not carefully selected. Only such a picked vanguard could successfully lead the masses of uneducated workers under the conditions of "endless fragmentation, oppression, and mental torpor."¹⁹ Martov felt that this was an incorrect assumption. To him the Zubatovshchina's growth had been due largely to the party's failure to open its doors wide to the leadership that the working class "had itself created" and to make room for the individual initiative of these leaders.²⁰

Martov was following the line of "free process of ideological struggle" that was characteristic of the interests of the Jewish intelligentsia. In 1903, Martov would show that he had those interests in mind.

In May of 1902, Martov encouraged the Bund to take any action that might be necessary to stop the spread of the Zubatovshchina menace.²¹ While the Bund had been virtually

¹⁹Vladimir Lenin, "Shag Vpered, Dva Shaga Nazad," Socheniniva, VII, 239.

²⁰Ibid., p. 240.

²¹M. Rafes, Ocherki po Iskoriya Bunda, p. 109.

helpless in areas outside of their control, the attempt to establish an Independent Jewish Party in Odessa, a strong Bundist center, led to the downfall of Zubatov and police socialism in Southern Russia. With the approval of the police a series of strikes, which thanks to the Social Democrats soon got out of hand, were conducted by the Independents. The strikes, which had begun as economic protests, ended in a political protest that resulted in a stoppage of industry, not only in Odessa, but all over Southern Russia. Zubatov was dismissed, the leaders of the Independent Jewish Party arrested, and the Bundists were once again the only Jewish workers' part in Russia.²²

The triumph of the Bund was a triumph for Iskra as well. As Shapiro writes: "It is easy to see what valuable ammunition it provided for Iskra in its fight against Economism. Iskra could argue that for the workers to confine themselves to economic demands was to play into the hands of the police."²³

No discernible conflicts among the members of the Iskra editorial board appeared until late 1902. There were visible signs that many Social Democrats were being "re-converted" to the "true" Marxist position of Iskra and that the extremists in the Economist movement were becoming isolated

²²Bertram Wolfe, Three Who Made a Revolution, p. 375, and L. Greemberg, The Jews in Russia, p. 179.

²³Leonard Shapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, p. 42.

from their former adherents. This, Martov could appreciate.

Several important problems, on the other hand, remained to be solved. What organizational tactics must be employed to maintain a centralized party? What role should the party apparatus assume in the party? In 1902 Lenin proceeded to define these problems in his essay Chto Delat'.

In Chto Delat' there is a statement of the principles upon which Lenin wished to base the whole social democratic movement. This essay is not only important for this discussion, but for an understanding of the organizational principles upon which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would be based.

When the pamphlet first appeared, Martov voiced no objection. If Lenin is to be believed, Martov lauded the publication of Chto Delat' as a "main link" in the understanding of the necessity for a centralized party.²⁴ Martov was probably referring to the first two chapters of Chto Delat' which were devoted to upholding the revolutionary theory of Marx in opposition to the Bernsteinian Revisionists and their followers in Russia.

In attacking the kritiki, Lenin introduced his idea that the party must be the vanguard of the working class, that the party cadres must be professional revolutionaries who would devote their entire lives to the cause of the party and the working class, and that these professionals

²⁴Vladimir Lenin, "What is to be done," Selected Works, II, 51n.

must be armed with a revolutionary theory to train the workers to understand scientific socialism.²⁵

Arguing within the framework of the old familiar categories, "spontaneity" and "consciousness," Lenin admitted spontaneity was a natural development. The Economists, he said, taking advantage of this natural development when they agitated among the workers to improve their immediate economic status. But spontaneity did nothing to bring about a proletarian class consciousness. In fact, argued Lenin, it led to the repudiation of the need for a proletarian party; the denial of a proletarian party led the Economists to deny the need for an independent proletarian theory and tactics. This was the reason, he concluded, that the Economists embraced a deomocratic policy--a policy that called for a union with all the liberal groups in Russia.²⁶

Logically, Lenin's analysis was full of holes. As an interpretation of what had actually happened in Russia, it must have been convincing to many Social Democrats.

The solution Lenin offered was that the Social Democrats must have a revolutionary theory. Without this specifically proletarian theory, the working class would be subordinated to bourgeois ideology and bourgeois politics.²⁷

²⁵Vladimir Lenin, "What is to be done," Selected Works, II, 48.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 60-65.

²⁷Ibid., p. 170.

The assumption that an all-Russian liberal union would lead to a bourgeois domination of the working class, was of course, one of Martov's strongest beliefs. Ob Agitatsia contained a similar interpretation of the effects of isolating spontaneity from consciousness.²⁸

The differences between Chto Delat' and Ob Agitatsia are perhaps more important. Martov's interpretation of the history of the struggle for emancipation included the belief that by virtue of the workers' experience in the spontaneous economic struggle, they would develop a class consciousness. Dan pointed out that Martov's formula "created the impression that the working class would 'ripen' to a capacity to absorb political agitation."²⁹ By meeting head on with the reactionary government the workers would realize that to solve their problems the government would have to be overthrown in a revolution. Lenin clearly had no such faith in the worker. As he stated in Chto Delat': "The theoretical doctrine social democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the labor movement...and it could only be brought in from without."³⁰ Lenin's statement "from without" meant outside of the working class. The professional revolutionary intelligentsia, armed with Marx's theory of

²⁸A. Kremer, Ob Agitatsia, p. 18.

²⁹Feodor Dan, Proiskhozhdenie Bol'shevizma, p. 244.

³⁰Vladimir Lenin, "What is to be Done," Selected Works, II, 181.

revolution, could be the only vehicle through which the workers, in the first stages of development at least, could understand scientific socialism.³¹ The intelligentsia would act as "revolutionary bacilli" spreading the doctrine of Marx to the worker, creating out of the working class a firm cadre of worker intellectuals. The proletariat, in other words, could not develop a socialist consciousness on their own. They could not "train themselves."³² The party, then, was to be the agent through which these devoted revolutionaries worked. The party had to determine the best tactics to use in order to further the interests of the proletariat on the basis of a Marxian analysis of what these interests were.

For Martov, only those tactics which would guide the worker to his own self-consciousness should be employed by the Social Democratic Party. The role of the intelligentsia would be to interpret for the worker, if necessary, his experience in the economic struggle, but nothing more.³³ Lenin felt that the party should guide the worker to a revolution not to a class consciousness. Only those workers specially trained by the intelligentsia could "appreciate their class interests and the historic tasks of the proletariat."³⁴

³¹Vladimir Lenin, "What is to be Done," Selected Works, II, 182.

³²Ibid.

³³Arkady Kremer, Ob Agitatsia, p. 20.

³⁴Lenin, p. 189.

The arguments in Chto Delat' were to be presented again at the Second Party Congress.

Iskra was now in a favorable position in the party. Since the majority of the local organizations seemed to be on their side, Lenin began making preparations for the Congress. As early as March, 1902 an Organizational Committee representing all of the major factions of the party had been established for convening the party congress. These factions then began to draw up their respective programs and speeches to be presented. The Iskra-ists had agreed on a program but the question of what rules to adopt for the control of the party's organization had yet to be decided.

Lenin was clear in his demand that the rules of the organization should allow the establishment of a tightly controlled centralized party. Because of the increasing vigilance of the Okhrana, the revolutionaries, under Lenin's plan, were to be controlled from two main centers: A Central Organ, or CO, located in Europe and responsible for the publications of the party; and a Central Committee, or CC, to which was entrusted the immediate supervision of revolutionary activities. The CO was to act as the ideological base for the party--the real core of professional theoreticians--and to maintain agreement between the two groups the method of cooptation was to be employed. Cooptation, the selection of representatives to each others organization, was Lenin's guarantee that the members would act in "complete

solidarity and unity of purpose."³⁵ Under both committees a series of subcommittees was to be appointed. These subcommittees in turn directed agitation and propaganda in their immediate locale. They were the "action centers" doing what they were told to do.

Before the Congress opened in Brussels, Lenin showed Martov the proposed draft. He may have shown it to the other members of the Iskra editorial board, but Martov's comments were the only ones Lenin recorded.³⁶ Martov, though he objected to the proposed draft, was indirect in his criticism and suggested a rephrasing of two major ambiguous parts: Who was to be included as a party member, and what exactly was to be the relationship between the CC and the CO? It was these two points which would ultimately bring about the clash between Martov and Lenin.

Martov's formula for the new party was not very different from the ideas he expressed at Vilno. He emphasized the value of an all inclusive party membership, democratically organized, and emphasized the practical immediate needs of the revolutionaries in their day-to-day struggle. By suggesting a rephrasing of Lenin's definition of party membership, Martov pointed to the fact that the proposed draft made no mention of where in the pyramidal structure of committees and subcommittees the line would be drawn between party

³⁵Vladimir Lenin, "Shag Vpered, Dva Shaga Nazad," Socheneniya, VII, p. 313.

³⁶Ibid. In the English edition Martov's comments were deleted.

member and sympathizer. Would only the intelligentsia hold this title or would the factory agitators be included too? Lenin's formulation on this point stated: "Everyone is considered a member of the party who accepts the party program and who supports the party by material means as well as by personal participation in one of the party organizations."³⁷ Martov's suggested revision still did not answer the question, but it suggested at least that the membership would be more inclusive than Lenin's. It read: "Everyone is considered to belong to the RSDRP who accepts its program and works to carry out its tasks in life, under the control and leadership of the party organs."³⁸

On the question of the CC and CO, Martov was disturbed over the fact that the proposed draft did not distinguish clearly the activities to be carried on by the two centers and what authority each would have over issues that could have theoretical as well as practical implications---in other words, over any issue. Lenin's formula was vague though it tended to enhance the ideological leadership of the CO.³⁹ Martov's

³⁷Vladimir Lenin, "Shag Vpered, Dva Shaga Nazad," Socheneniya, VII, p. 227.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹The editor of Lenin's Socheneniya remarks that Lenin's first draft statement on the respective roles of the CC and CO had been lost. From Martov's comments about this draft and Lenin's subsequent discussions about it, it is possible to deduce the nature of the original. Vladimir Lenin, "Shag Vpered, Dva Shaga Nazad," Socheneniya, VII, 228. For Martov's comments see following footnote.

rephrasing of this rule again did not reveal a decided difference in the respective positions of the two leaders. Yet Martov's changes attempted to restore the balance between the CC and CO. It read: "On the CC lies the general leadership of all the practical activity of the party, on the literary organs lies the ideological leadership of party life, of propaganda for the party program, and of scientific and journalistic development of the world view of Social Democracy."⁴⁰

The crux of the debate over the party rules can be seen as a disagreement over the total view of the party and its role in the revolutionary movement. Should it be based on the principles found in Chto Delat' or should it be based on the Jewish experience outlined in Ob Agitatsia? Martov had reason to believe that Lenin wanted the CO, the theoretical headquarters of the party, eventually to control the entire movement and make the CC, in effect, a subcommittee. In the provision for mutual cooptation of committee members, Martov saw how this would be accomplished. The CC, exposed as it was to police arrest, needed to replace its own members, and not wait for a joint meeting of the CC and the CO for this purpose. The result, Martov argued, "would be the domination of the CO in a few months time."⁴¹ In this statement, Martov

⁴⁰Yuri Osipovich Martov, "Pis'ma P. B. Aksel'roda i Y. O. Martova," Arkhiv Russkoi Revolyutsii (18 vols.; Berlin: B. T. Tesson', 1922), I, 10.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 12.

actually came out in opposition to Lenin's views, and even then he agreed to compromise: "During the interval between party congresses," Martov asserted, "cooptation in the CC and the CO should be on another basis than mutual cooptation. Each college should coopt its own members. The other college should be entitled to protest; then the matter would go to the Soviet [a council composed of representatives of the two centers]."⁴²

The Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party finally opened on July 30, 1903 in Brussels. The Tagesordnung (agenda) had been drawn up by Lenin several weeks before. Martov had suggested a few changes but had given his assent.⁴³ Unknowingly Martov may have sealed his fate at the Congress with his approval of the agenda. Lenin had very cleverly placed as the first order of the day the discussion on federalism. Confident that the proposal would be rejected, Lenin hoped that the Bund, the largest Social Democratic organization in Russia, would walk out on the Congress and leave Iskra to fight only the Economist Rabochee Delo group for control.⁴⁴

The Bund, it will be recalled, had voted in their Fourth

⁴²Vladimir Lenin, "Shag Vpered, Dva Shaga Nazad," Sochineniya, VII, 228.

⁴³Vladimir Lenin, "An Account of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.," Selected Works, II, 342.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 342.

Congress in April 1901 and again in 1903 at their Fifth Congress to construct the Social Democratic Party on a federative basis in order that they might be the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat.⁴⁵ That Lenin should oppose federation is understandable. For Martov, however, federalism was much nearer to his view of what the party structure should be. Martov had even submitted a resolution at the Congress to permit regional autonomy for the Caucasus and national cultural autonomy for the nations composing the Caucasus. In a speech before the Congress he justified his stand by saying: "The vast extent of Russia and the experience of our centralized administration point to the necessity and expediency of regional self-government for such large units as Finland, Poland, Lithuania, and the Caucasus."⁴⁶ From this idea of regional self-government follows the idea of regional autonomy. Thus the Jewish concentration in Poland and Lithuania were to be granted a form of self-determination under Martov's plan.

The reason Martov opposed the Bund was probably because the Jewish organization would not comply to the Iskra demand for a centralized party. Henry J. Tobias in his analysis of the relationship between the Bund and Lenin has this to

⁴⁵Ante, p. 30.

⁴⁶Joseph Stalin, Marxism and the National Question (New York: International Publishers, 1942), p. 53.

say about Martov's criticism of Bundist separatism:

Martov...criticized the Bund for its efforts to squeeze the Jewish workers into narrow nationalist channels when the chief evil afflicting them was a government policy which retarded their rapprochement with the surrounding population. He pointedly contrasted the Bund's behaviour with that of the Jewish workers in the south who worked hand in hand with their Russian colleagues for the general demands of the proletariat.⁴⁷

While Martov had declared his opposition to the "nationalistic" trend followed by the Bund at their Congresses, in all fairness to the Bund, it would be a mistake to say that nationalism in 1903 was very strong. Martov must have realized this. The Bundists believed, as did Martov, that a broadly based party would best achieve the aims of social democracy. Just as Martov had argued in 1895, the Bund maintained that a broadly based party could not come about unless the special needs of the Jewish workers were taken into account--the use of the Yiddish language for example.⁴⁸ The Bund was a democratically based party with a mixture of intellectuals and workers at the leadership level. Martov in his memoirs had praised this quality and added that, in his interpretation of Marxism, a democratic structure for the party was imperative.⁴⁹ Martov's action then seems

⁴⁷Henry Tobias, "The Bund and Lenin," The Russian Review, p. 348.

⁴⁸Ante, p. 28.

⁴⁹Ante, p. 27.

unrealistic and contradictory unless one takes into account the fact that the Bund represented a competitor to Iskra's formation of a unified party. Unfortunately, once Martov took a stand on an issue he would not easily alter his position. At any rate, the Bund, until it did walk out during the thirty seventh session of the Second Congress, voted with Martov on every important issue.⁵⁰

The first clash between Martov and Lenin was over a seemingly small matter, but like other seemingly insignificant differences that were finally to draw these two revolutionaries apart, this matter too may be seen in a broader perspective. In a private session of the Iskra caucus the question of selecting a presidium for the convention was raised. The purpose of this presidium was to settle disputes by negotiation instead of taking up time in the general session.⁵¹ Martov proposed that the presidium be composed of nine men including a representative from the Bund and Rabochee Delo. Lenin's proposal provided for only three members, all of them Iskraits, who would "rule with a firm hand, if necessary with an iron fist."⁵² Martov's

⁵⁰Vladimir Lenin, "An Account of the Second Congress," Selected Works, II, p. 352.

⁵¹The presidium was similar to our Congressional Ways and Means Committee.

⁵²Lenin, II, p. 354.

formula was consistent with his democratic leanings. Lenin had his way as Plekhanov was selected as chairman, Lenin and Krasikov as vice-chairmen--all Iskraists.

As the Congress moved on toward the last item on the Tagesordnung, voting on the party rules, Martov and Lenin braced for a showdown. Paragraph one of the rules was the definition of a member. Martov and Lenin presented rival drafts. The definition Lenin proposed was as follows:

"A member of the RSDLP is one who recognizes its program and supports the party materially as well as by PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN ONE OF THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE PARTY."⁵³ Martov wished only to change the capitalized phrase to read: "By regular personal assistance under the direction of one of the party organizations."⁵⁴

Needless to say the delegates were confused over the excited insistence that the two drafts were very different.

Lenin took to the floor and explained his formulation:

Martov's formula ignores one of the chief evils in party life, the fact that under existing conditions, it is difficult if not impossible to distinguish in the party between babblers and actual workers. Nowhere is this confusion more prevalent or more harmful than it is in Russia. Yet Martov's formula legalizes this evil; it strives to make each and every one a party member....In order to preserve the firmness and

⁵³Vladimir Lenin, Selected Works, Editors Explanatory Note, p. 349.

⁵⁴Ibid.

maintain the purity of our party, we must strive to raise the title and the significance of party membership higher and higher. For this reason, I stand opposed to Martov's formula.⁵⁵

Martov countered that he was for a centralized party too but would have no part in an organization whose members "abdicated their right to think." Martov explained: "The more widely the title of party member is extended, the better. We can only rejoice if every striker, if every demonstrator, proclaims himself a party member when he answers for his deeds."⁵⁶ In another speech Martov concluded:

In our eyes, the labor party is not limited to an organization of professional revolutionaries. It consists of them plus the entire combination of the active, leading elements of the proletariat... Our formula alone expresses the striving that between the organization of professional revolutionaries and the masses exist a whole series of organizations.⁵⁷

The debate went on for two whole sessions. Aksel'rod and Trotsky (interestingly enough both were Jews) joined Martov in his fight. At last a final roll call was ordered. Martov won the point 28 to 22.⁵⁸ The Bundists and Rabochee

⁵⁵Vladimir Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," Selected Works, II, 413.

⁵⁶Vladimir Lenin, "Shag Vpered, Dva Shaga Nazad," Socheneniya, VII, 238. Martov's statements are only in the Russian edition.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 254.

⁵⁸Vladimir Lenin, "An Account of the Second Congress," Selected Works, II, 350.

Deloist had cast all seven of their combined votes for Martov. Iskra had split.

From this point on, the "Iskraists of the zig-zag line" as Lenin called Martov's group, held separate sessions from the "firm Iskraists," Lenin's group. The Martovites proposed a separate list of candidates for the Central Committee but all nine were defeated. On paragraph ten, the selection of members to the Central Organ, Lenin, Plekhanov, and Martov were elected. Martov refused to serve.⁵⁹ Rule twelve, the question of cooptation, was the only other important rule to be decided. Once again Martov compiled a 28 to 22 win over Lenin and his group.⁶⁰

After the general rules had been adopted, the Congress turned its attention to the rules of the Bund. By an overwhelming majority the Congress again rejected the proposal of the Bund for federation. The Bundists then left the Congress and seceded from the party. The Martovites thus lost five very important votes.⁶¹

Lenin was quick to take advantage of this windfall. He immediately introduced a motion to dissolve Rabochee Delo as a foreign publication in order to give exclusive

⁵⁹Vladimir Lenin, "An Account of the Second Congress," Selected Works, II, 356.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 350.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 352.

recognition to Iskra. Martov, being a loyal Iskraist, voted for the proposed plan and lost two more votes. The Rabochee Deloists now walked out. Lenin now had a majority of two votes.⁶²

Martov was clearly no politician. In this instance as in numerous others, he demonstrated that to sacrifice a principle was worse than losing a battle. While Martov might have compromised a conviction and voted for the Bundist proposal, the Bundists themselves might be blamed for political shortsightedness too. Their walking out when they held a strategic position in the coalition of Martovites and Rabochee Deloists was not exactly brilliant.

Though it was not brilliant it was not opportunistic either. Lenin and the Bolsheviks were to level this charge against Martov, the Economists, and the Bundists, when, if anything, Lenin was the most opportunistic of them all.⁶³

When the Second Congress had ended, Bolshevism and Menshevism were hardly "isms" in the sense of having a distinctly formulated sets of beliefs, or even a distinct program for social democracy. This is not to say that there were no differences, but rather that these differences

⁶²Vladimir Lenin, "An Account of the Second Congress," Selected Works, II, 356.

⁶³Consider Lenin's continued use of the name "Bolshevik." That was certainly opportunism for it conveyed the idea that Lenin was always in the "majority."

were still too subtle to be expressed in concrete terms.

In the final chapter an analysis of these differences will be presented in an effort to determine Martov's Jewish influence on Menshevism.

CHAPTER IV

MARTOV, MENSHEVISM, AND THE JEWISH INTELLIGENTSIA A CONCLUSION

In 1907 Stalin, reporting on the London party congress, wrote:

Statistics show that the majority of the Menshevik faction consists of Jews--and this of course without counting the Bundists--after which come Georgians and then Russians. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the Bolshevik faction consists of Russians. For this reason, one of the Bolsheviks observed in jest (it seems, Comrade Alexinsky) that the Mensheviks are a Jewish faction, the Bolsheviks a genuine Russian faction, whence it wouldn't be a bad idea for us Bolsheviks to arrange a pogrom in the party.¹

The number of Jewish revolutionaries in the Menshevik party was certainly very great. This could hardly have been accidental. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine how much, or what parts, of the Menshevik program was a direct result of this Jewish influence. It will be shown, therefore, that Martov's interpretation of social democracy after the Second Congress was consistent with the overall attitudes of the Jewish intelligentsia as expressed

¹Cited in: Bertram Wolfe, Three Who Made a Revolution, p. 468. Shapiro's figures for the same Congress show that the Jewish delegates numbered about 100, or roughly one third of all the delegates when the 57 Bundists are included. Over one fifth of the delegates who followed the Menshevik line were Jews, as against one tenth of pro-Bolshevik delegates. L. Shapiro, "The Role of the Jews in the Russian Revolutionary Movement," Slavonic and East European Review, XL, 160.

earlier in his career.

In September, 1903 the Mensheviks held a five day conference at which an attempt was made to formulate some doctrinal basis for their position in the debate with Lenin. Martov and Trotsky then announced the resolution:

Considering that at the Second Congress of our party there evidently triumphed, in a number of questions, a tendency to change radically the former tactics of Iskra and to place the juridical strengthening of the power of the new editorial board over the ideological-training and the ideological-organizing role of the paper; considering that this tendency was expressed in the creation of a Soviet which constitutes solely a transmission mechanism of the administrative power of the new editorial board of Iskra and an instrument of its tutelage over the Central Committee, which relegates the latter to the role of a simple servicing technical apparatus; considering that this sort of action must inevitably split the party into an arbitrarily selected, self-enclosed central organization on one hand, and a wide broken-down mass of Social Democratic workers on the other, compromising thereby the very concept of a single, centralized, and fighting party, we recognize that in the interest of the preservation and consolidation of unity in our party, we must wage an energetic and principled struggle against the tendency of deformed centralism characterized above, and prepare public opinion for a Third Congress.²

This declaration expressed a doctrinal position of sorts, but a negative one. It embodied Martov's concept that the worker should maintain his samodeyatel'nost', his independent initiative or spontaneity, yet the resolution was stated in a negative manner. It was a declaration

²Yuri Martov and Lev Trotsky, "Resolution about our Current Tasks in the Intra-Party Struggle," Leninskiĭ Sbornik, VI, 205.

against the "mechanism" of the Bolshevik centralist tendency, it was against the reduction of initiative of the party members, it was against disunity of the party, but it did not express what it was for.

After considerable debate between Lenin and Martov in the revolutionary press and later during the Congress of the League of Social Democrats Abroad, Martov's arguments finally struck at the roots of the controversy. In a speech before the Congress he said:

Of the two opposed organizational tendencies, one is expressed in the statement made by Lenin yesterday that "the wider the movement the wider already the organization," and in the argument of his partisans at the congress that our version of Paragraph One brings opportunistic intelligenty into the party; the second is expressed in the effort not to permit the strongly conspiratorial and necessarily narrow organizations of professional revolutionaries to tear themselves away from the masses of active fighters, from the conscious workers acting under the leadership of our committees....In our eyes, an organization on the whole constitutes an autonomously formed and secure collectivity.³

"An autonomously formed and secure collectivity" is what the Jewish Bund had been arguing since 1901. The history of the Bund after the Second Congress parallels the history of the Menshevik party very closely. As Leonard Shapiro wrote: "Each group was attempting to uphold the same kind of principles of social democracy which it believed

³Vladimir Lenin, Selected Works, II, 443. The speech excerpt was quoted in Explanatory Notes by the editors.

in danger of being destroyed by Lenin."⁴

What were these principles? What is entailed here is an interpretation of Marxism which Martov and the Jewish intelligentsia held in common. This interpretation may be said to include: (1) the creation of a broadly based democratic revolutionary workers' party, (2) the assertion that the liberal bourgeoisie must first overthrow the reactionary autocracy before the proletarian stage of the revolution could begin, (3) the belief that the revolution must be internationalist in character. In all the debate between Lenin and Martov, there is no reference to these principles, yet it was these principles that were behind the squabble over party organization.

In the period of 1905-1907 the revolutionary atmosphere was free of most restraints formerly imposed by the police. The revolutionaries came out of their underground world and conducted their activities in the open. The Social Democrats for the first time could vote and elect their leaders without fear of the Okhrana.⁵ The organizational differences which had caused the split in the party were discussed lightly.

⁴Leonard Shapiro, "The Role of the Jews in the Russian Revolutionary Movement," Slavonic and East European Review, XL, 160.

⁵Isaac Deutscher, The Prophet Armed (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 137.

Lenin even agreed with Martov that the committees of the party should be elected from below and not from above.⁶ Before the end of the year 1906, the two factions were on the road to unification. Complete reunion could possibly have been achieved had not a drastic change in the revolutionary movement taken place. On June 3, 1907 the tsar Nicholas II reverted to reaction. The Duma was dissolved and for all intents and purposes the revolution had ended.

After the revolution of 1905 began, Martov in Europe and Potresov in Russia became convinced that the only way the workers could take their place as a powerful force in the complete overthrow of autocracy was to build a mass party organization. The failure of the revolution had indicated that Russia was far from a mass organization and that trade unionism with its emphasis on strikes and demonstrations must be developed to their fullest extent.⁷ Martov's conception of the party's role in this activity was based even more on the principles outlined in Ob Agitatsia. By utilizing such opportunities as the semi-constitutional Duma set up in 1906 Martov felt that the workers' consciousness would continue to grow and that "upon this consciousness alone" the party could be based.⁸ In a letter

⁶Vladimir Lenin, Sochineniya, X, 12-21.

⁷Vladimir Lenin, Sochineniya, XII, 147-148.

⁸Ibid., p. 441.

to Aksel'rod in 1906 Martov wrote: "We shall strive to bring about a change in the composition of the leading bodies, which will secure to the party the possibility of working freely towards its own enlightenment."⁹ By "working freely" Martov implied that all restrictions, all obstructions to the attainment of the workers' self-consciousness and independent initiative had to be removed. The Social Democratic party had to be an independent party, free from the interference of the liberal bourgeoisie, who Martov had always eyed suspiciously. The party had to be free from such groups who "misunderstood the character of the historical process and the nature of the workers' needs," as Martov said.¹⁰

What was this historical process? To Martov, this process was embodied in the Marxian argument that a bourgeois revolution must precede the socialist revolution. Granted Russia had not witnessed the development of a conscious bourgeois society, Martov argued, but the successes of the bourgeoisie during the early stages of the revolution indicated the growth of this consciousness, and the democratization of all society, as Marx predicted, seemed to be realized in the creation of the Duma.¹¹ Lenin would argue

⁹Pavel B. Aksel'rod and Y. O. Martov, "Pis'ma P. B. Aksel'roda i Y. O. Martova," Arkhiv Russkoi Revolyutsii, I, 4.

¹⁰Ibid., I, 6.

¹¹Donald W. Treadgold, Lenin and His Rivals (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1955), p. 181-182.

that Russia could skip the bourgeois stage of the revolution and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat. The only conditions necessary for the triumph of the proletariat was a strong working class movement led by loyal and devoted communists once the proper economic level of the country had been reached.¹² Russia's historical development, Lenin argued, did not demand the process described by Marx.¹³

The task of social democracy for Martov then was to encourage and aid the bourgeois victory over the tsarist regime. This involved, of course, the possibility of a bourgeois hegemony on the activities of the proletariat, but Martov was willing to take the risk. In spite of his doubts on the political reliability of the liberal bourgeois movement, Martov wrote to Aksel'rod that the support given by the "conscious" proletariat would be sufficient for it to gain its legitimate ends. In the same letter he wrote: "The proletariat will prevent any halfway compromise through its pressure upon the bourgeois opposition, through the strength of its influence over the laboring masses, and thanks to its consolidated and independent political position."¹⁴

Martov's idea of the historical process was becoming more clear with every publication, with every letter. The

¹²Donald Treadgold, Lenin and His Rivals, p. 156.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Pavel B. Aksel'rod and Y. O. Martov, "Pis'ma P. B. Aksel'roda i Y. O. Martova," Arkhiv Russkoi Revolyutsii, I, p. 7.

coming revolution was to be a bourgeois democratic revolution. It would abolish the feudalistic state structure, clear the way for the free growth of capitalism, establish a democratic republic, and bring the bourgeoisie to power. Once this republic had established itself, Martov wrote in 1906:

...There would be open political life, freedom to propagate socialist ideas, to organize the working class politically and economically and develop in it the culture, experience, self-consciousness and power necessary to prepare, at some future date, a second revolution, a socialist revolution. That revolution could be democratic only when the proletariat should become a majority of the population. But the proletariat in its present condition in this backward land could not dream of taking power, nor should the Social Democratic Party entertain the idea of entering into the provisional government. Since it could not secure the enactment of its own program in so backward a country, it would only compromise its program and itself by taking responsibility for the actions of a bourgeois government. To be revolutionary now means to fight tsarism, to support the bourgeoisie in its struggle for power, to encourage it and push it and exact from it the promise of a maximum of freedom for the working class.¹⁵

The following year Martov's enthusiasm had understandably cooled, but he maintained his belief that a bourgeois revolution would still come. The 1905-1907 revolution, Martov said, had proved not to be the bourgeois revolution Marx had predicated but a "step backward towards the feudal nobility."¹⁶ Hence he denied the charge, advanced by Lenin, that the bourgeoisie had "deserted to the side of counter

¹⁵Y. Martov, Leninskiĭ Sbornik, VI, 218-219.

¹⁶Vladimir Lenin, Selected Works, IV, 367. Quoted in Explanatory Notes of the Editors.

revolution," and was supporting the autocracy.¹⁷ The job of the proletariat was now to "push" the liberal bourgeoisie into this fight. Martov then argued that, because of the timid nature of the liberals, the party should be careful not to "frighten the bourgeoisie by making excessive demands."¹⁸

To this statement Lenin responded by name-calling. The term "liquidationism" was leveled at Martov and many of his Menshevik colleagues. The word "liquidationism" was actually meaningless, in this writers opinion, but because nine-tenths of the liquidationists were Jews, it may be helpful to understand Martov's brand of liquidationism.¹⁹

During the revolution of 1905-1907, while agitation was conducted freely, a number of Mensheviks disavowed the underground tactics previously employed by the party. Lenin charged that they wished to "liquidate" the underground organization entirely. Martov himself was not convinced of the necessity for a strict and secret party though he never thought of liquidating the underground network. In an essay entitled: "Is this the Right Way to Prepare," Martov clarifies his stand:

¹⁷Vladimir Lenin, Selected Works, IV, 367. Quoted in Explanatory Notes of the Editors.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹The fact that nine-tenths of the liquidators were Jews was an approximation given in: L. Shapiro, "The Role of the Jews in the Russian Revolutionary Movement," Slavonic and East European Review, XI, 161.

The more the understanding of the current political tasks of our Party becomes narrowed in the minds of some comrades, and the more they are inclined in practice to put up passively with the "poverty and imperfection" of our day-to-day work and of its astounding backwardness--by no means less astounding than in the days of Economism--as compared with the demands put forth by the spontaneously insurgent masses, the more exclusively are their thoughts directed towards that luminous point which they visualize as an insurrection manufactured by them in the underground of a "strictly secret organization" and "set in motion by order of an all-powerful center."²⁰

Martov's tendency to endorse an uncontrolled social democratic movement--bowing to spontaneity--was thus expressed again, as was his opposition to what he called "Jacobinism, Blanquism, and conspiracy in the Bolshevik camp."

Lenin's accusation that Martov was a liquidationist was, in the strict sense of the term, inaccurate. There was another meaning which became attached to liquidationism, however. Openly pursuing the policy of supporting the liberal bourgeoisie was interpreted by Lenin as liquidationism as well. In his essay: "On to the High Road," Lenin demonstrates this point:

In the period of 1905-1907 the general political line of the Mensheviks was the line of cooperation with the liberal bourgeoisie and the subordination of the revolutionary labor movement to the latter. As pursued by the liquidators, this line assumed the character of subordinating the revolutionary labor movement to the interests of the bargain which the liberal bourgeoisie had already made with tsarism and of the pettifogging,

²⁰Vladimir Lenin, Selected Works, II, 560. Excerpt quoted in Explanatory Notes of the editors. Lenin's secretive methods were noted by Martov in 1895. Ante, p.

liberal reformist patching up of the regime which had established itself after the defeat of the revolution of 1905-1907.²¹

Martov, by supporting the liberal movement, was a liquidator, but in Lenin's view an "inconsistent liquidator" for he advocated the continuation of the underground activity of the party.²²

The underground, as conceived by Martov, was to be a skeletal affair upon which the party could fall back should it be necessary. The main emphasis was to be on trade unionism. The Jewish Bund after 1903 was hardly more than a trade union. The Bolshevik distrust of this type of activity is certainly one of the reasons for the fact that few Jews were in the Bolshevik party. It is also the reason why the Bolsheviks until 1917 could not rally the workers to the Bolshevik cause. Zinoviev in his party history of 1922 comments on this: "We did not win the trade unions until after the October Revolution of 1917. Up till then the Mensheviks had the majority there. The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' had to be set up in 1917 against the will of the organized proletariat."²³

An analogous difference in orientation is seen in the attitudes of Lenin and Martov on the role of the Duma. Martov

²¹Vladimir Lenin, "On to the High Road," Selected Works, IV, 7-8.

²²Ibid., p. 11.

²³Cited in: Bertram Wolfe, Three Who Made a Revolution, p. 522.

was inclined to give more emphasis to parliamentary activity. He saw in the Duma an opportunity for a "democratically elected spokesman of broad masses of workers," capable of forming a legal leadership for a "broad, legal labor party."²⁴ In the letter to Aksel'rod just quoted, Martov reflected the general attitude of the Jewish intelligentsia toward representative institutions based on western democratic principles. Bertram Wolfe's description of the Menshevik and the Bolshevik representatives in the Duma substantiates the difference in attitude when he wrote that the Menshevik leaders in the Duma were usually men of "high caliber" whereas the Bolshevik representatives were "all simple workmen lacking in self-confidence on the floor of the Duma."²⁵

Martov did not lose faith in these principles in spite of the Stolypin reaction. While abroad he edited the Menshevik paper Golos Sotsial Demokrata where he continued to influence the Menshevik program of "conciliation" with the bourgeoisie. To the demands of Parvus and Lenin for an armed insurrection, Martov countered that an armed uprising, like a revolution at large, could not be organized against the regime at this time--it would have to come about on its own accord with the growth of popular revolt. But first, Martov insisted, the historical mission of the bourgeoisie

²⁴Pavel B. Aksel'rod and Y. O. Martov, "Pis'ma P. B. Aksel'roda i Y. O. Martova," Krkhiv Russkoi Revolyutsii, p. 9.

²⁵Bertram Wolfe, Three Who Made a Revolution, p. 534.

must be realized. "We have a right to expect," said Martov, "that sober political calculation will prompt our bourgeois democracy to act in the same way in which, in the past century, bourgeois democracy to act in the same way in which, in the past century, bourgeois democracy acted in western Europe, under the inspiration of revolutionary romanticism."²⁶

The key phrase in the above quotation is "the way... bourgeois democracy acted in western Europe." All Marxists, since the struggle with the Narodniks, had seen their mission as the "Europeanization" of Russian social democracy. After 1907, if it had not been explicit before the, the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks gave a different meaning to this term. Most modern historians of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia tend to accept the view that in transplanting Marxism in Russia, there were two distinct responses among the Social Democrats.²⁷ One response was to emphasize the Europeanization process in the party's organization and tactics. The other response was to Russify Marxism--to adapt it to the peculiar historical development of Russia. At least two of these historians have presented a case for the argument that Bolshevism, in its attempts to Russify Marxism went beyond

²⁶Cited in: Isaac Deutscher, The Prophet Armed, p. 119.

²⁷For example: L. Haimson, M. Malia, L. Shapiro, B. Elkin, I. Deutscher.

the western context of Marxism by combining Marxism with Populism. Michael Karpovich has called attention to Lenin's debt to Tkachev, the Narodnik leader of the 1870's.²⁸ Richard Pipes discusses the similarity in tactics between Bolshevism and Populism in the emphasis both place on the seizure of power by revolutionaries, the need for a tight professional organization, and a mass peasant uprising to back the uprising in the cities.²⁹

Lenin's abandonment of the two central tenets of European Marxism--the inevitability of capitalism and the need for a bourgeois revolution--was probably more a result of experience than a special affinity for Populism. Yet this experience was a Russian experience and Bolshevism was therefore a nationalistic experiment from the beginning. Lenin's denunciation of the liquidators is a good example of this. The liquidators attempted to justify their opposition to the clandestine operations of the party in an endeavor to Europeanize the Russian movement. European Social Democratic organizations worked in the open and so should the Russian, they argued.³⁰ In the Russian police state, especially

²⁸Michael Karpovich, "A Forerunner of Lenin: P. N. Tkachev," Review of Politics, XXI (July, 1944).

²⁹Richard Pipes, "Russian Marxism and its Populist Background," The Russian Review XIX, 316-318.

³⁰Vladimir Lenin, "On to the High Road," Selected Works, IV, p. 4.

under Stolypin, Lenin convincingly argued that western socialistic practices simply could not work. While Martov agreed with Lenin on this point and continued to support the underground organization, their reasons were different. An examination of Martov's reason for defending the underground activity of the party may clarify the dilemma which he was to face in the years to follow.

Outside of the obvious reason for maintaining the underground after the June 3 regime came to power (even the liquidators retreated to the underground then), Martov had a sentimental reason for embracing this "way of life." The underground had a particular Dostoevskian flavor in which Martov gloried. Martov's romanticism has already been described in Chapter One.³¹ This romanticism seems to be expressing itself here as well. The heroism, the martyrdom of the underground, however, was countered by a Jewish idea of internationalism and the need to reform Russia along western lines. Martov therefore could not oppose the liquidators who stood for westernization. Nor could he, with his preference for the underground and his fear of a bourgeois hegemony on the independence of the proletariat, become a liquidator. The only course Martov could take was to avoid the excesses of liquidationism, to suggest moderation and carefulness to his Jewish liquidationist colleagues in their

³¹Ante, p. 20.

association with the bourgeoisie, and defend their right, under a democratic organization, to remain in the party.

Martov's brand of Marxism had a special appeal to the Jewish intelligentsia, based as it was on a common experience. First of all it seemed to be very different than Lenin's distinctly Russian interpretation. It seemed to insure the universality of the working class, a universality which precluded any racial or other discrimination. Jewish emancipation, under Martov's formula, would be complete. The Jew would be the equal of his Russian counterpart. As Leonard Shapiro states: "Menshevism was an interpretation of Marxism which found a particularly responsive chord in Jewish traditions and temperament."³²

Temperament is an important word in this discussion. The difference in temperament between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks was becoming more and more apparent from the Revolution of 1905 until the outbreak of World War I. Perhaps Lenin had been correct when he called the Martovites "Soft Iskraists" or "Iskraists of the Zig Zag line." It characterized Martov as an idealist and his program for social democracy as unrealistic. Were not the attitudes of the Jewish intelligentsia in general idealistic? In their identification with a "western" interpretation of Marxism--an interpretation that did not ring of pogroms, reactionary

³² Leonard Shapiro, "The Role of the Jews in the Russian Revolutionary Movement," Slavonic and East European Review, XL, 161.

legislation, and general anti-Jewish sentiment--were not the Jews unrealistic? Their belief that anti-Semitism, whatever its form, would disappear in a socialist state, and that Jewish emancipation would be achieved not only in a legal sense, but in a social sense as well, could not even have been based on the experience of the Jews in Western Europe.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to trace the development of Martov's revolutionary career beyond the 1905-1907 revolution. The material already presented, however, offers us a clue to the fate of his little group of internationalists. The Bolshevik victory was not a victory of internationalism. It was not a victory for the Jew. Lenin would not even admit that the Jews were a nation.³³ The thousands of Jews who flocked to the Bolshevik party after the coup d'etat of November 7/8, 1917 were to be disappointed.³⁴

Today Martov seems to have been a prophet full of far-sighted intelligence. He pointed out that the Bolshevik proclamation of the Socialist republic and ignoring the historical process contemplated by Marx would result in something different than Marx expected.³⁵ He pointed out

³³See Joseph Stalin, Marxism and the National Question for the Bolshevik position on Jewish nationhood. Also: V. Lenin, "Does the Jewish Proletariat Need and Independent Political Party," Selected Works, II, p. 322.

³⁴Solomon Schwarz, The Jews in the Soviet Union, p. 41

³⁵Y. Martov, The State and the Socialist Revolution, (New York: International Review, 1936), p. 7.

that the dictatorship of the proletariat which Marx and Engels had described as having the form of a democratic republic was not to be confused with the dictatorship of the Bolshevik professional revolutionaries over the working class.³⁶ He foresaw that the pretention to a program of world revolution "affected by the Bolsheviks during their heroic period" served as a sort of camouflage to protect their position, and would in time give way again to the program of Russian "national socialism," the traditional and real program of Bolshevism.³⁷

By the end of 1920 there was no longer any place for a man like Martov. Lenin personally granted him a passport to go abroad, for despite their differences, Lenin had always regarded Martov as a close friend. Krupskaya recorded this feeling when she wrote:

It was exceedingly difficult for him [Lenin] to break with Martov. Afterwards, Vladimir Ilyich fought the Mensheviks, but every time Martov, even in the slightest degree, took the correct line, his old attitude towards him revived. Such was the case for example in Paris in 1910, when Martov and Vladimir Ilyich worked together on the editorial board of the Social Democrat. Coming home from the office, Vladimir Ilyich used to relate in joyful tones that Martov was taking a correct line.... Later, back in Russia, how pleased Vladimir Ilyich was with Martov's position in the July 1917 days; not because it was of any advantage to the Bolsheviks, but because Martov was acting worthily--as behooved a

³⁶Y. Martov, The State and the Socialist Revolution, p. 13.

³⁷Ibid., p. 26.

revolutionary. When Vladimir Ilyich was already seriously ill he said to me somewhat sadly, "Martov, they say, is dying too...."³⁸

Martov died of tuberculosis in 1923 while living as a poverty-stricken exile.

Unlike the American Negro "freedom rider" and his fight for desegregation, or the Indian Sikh who participates in a partition riot, Martov sought to dismiss his Jewishness and become a Russian. He would scarcely admit to being a Jew. Yet through his entire career, Martov, consciously or unconsciously responded to the demands of reality in a manner that can only be described as Jewish.

This thesis has presented the argument that Martov was not only influenced by his own experience as an oppressed Jew, but that he was influenced by the particular needs of all Jewry--that it was these needs and not his own personal needs that influenced his view of Russian historical development. His adoption of an assimilationist outlook may have been inspired by his education, but he hardly acquired this emphasis by chance. In his education as in his adoption of Marxism, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Martov believed that assimilation and socialism was the best way to prepare for the emancipation of the Jew. At Vilno Martov's view of emancipation was altered in the light of a real experience in the needs of his race. The

³⁸Cited in: Bertram Wolfe, Three Who Made a Revolution, p. 252-253.

organizational tactics he would endorse thus can be interpreted as a direct result of this experience. This experience at Vilno was to supplement the rather unsatisfactory idea of assimilation. Assimilation for Martov was never totally possible. Russia was really an alien land to him. Part of this was probably due to the fact that he spent most of his life abroad.

The solution to Russia's problems and to the problems of the Jews was thus seen by Martov as an internationalist, democratic Marxism. Though he would deny that this interpretation of Marxism was utopian, it was.

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE JEWISH INFLUENCE
ON MARTOV'S REVOLUTIONARY CAREER, 1891-1907

by

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As an interpretive essay on the complex of ideas that influenced the revolutionary position and activities of Yuri Osipovich Martov, this thesis attempts to explore certain factors in the area of nineteenth century Russian intellectual history which can be identified as part of Martov's Weltanschauung or world view. That Martov was an intelligent and thus an heir to the Russian intelligentsia tradition can be shown in the way he interpreted and defined the nature of man and the character of Russia's historical development. Equally discernible are the intellectual categories, the concepts, the basic assumptions which Martov held in common with the Russian intelligentsia. But Martov was also a Jew, and like the impact of the intelligentsia experience in general and Marxism in particular, Martov's Jewish background was to exercise a long lasting, if not a permanent, influence on his view of the world and his role in the revolutionary movement.

Though it will not be argued that there is a universal Jewish way of looking at things, this thesis will show that Martov was conscious of the long and tragic historical experience of the Jews in Russia and their struggle for emancipation, and that this orientation made him lean toward certain kinds of political solutions rather than to others, which impelled him to perceive and respond to various changes in the revolutionary climate in a manner which was recognizably Jewish.

Implicit in Martov's writings is the idea that the only way the Jews will be emancipated is to become Russians, to Russify their whole existence, and to join the "universal

struggling workers" in an effort to establish Marxian socialism in Russia. For this reason, Martov repudiated the nationalist-separatist movement among the Jews--including the attempt by the Jewish Bund to become an independent organ of the Social Democratic Party. Isolation of the Jews from the Russian workers, to Martov, would only make emancipation more distant.

One of the fundamental categories which many of the members of the intelligentsia recognized as the basis for all revolutionary activity was the "consciousness" vs. "spontaneity" conflict. Martov's solution was based on his experience at Vilno in the Jewish revolutionary movement. His pamphlet Ob Agitatsia (On Agitation) combined both categories, but it was a combination that leaned more toward spontaneity. This opposed Lenin's view that a devoted corps of professional revolutionaries should emphasize "consciousness" and lead the masses in a revolution.

At the Second Congress of the Party, The Social Democrats split into two groups--the Mensheviks led by Martov, and the Bolsheviks led by Lenin. The cause of the split went beyond the seemingly academic squabbles of the two leaders. Martov's argument for an organization including the "entire combination of the leading elements of the proletariat" was consistent with the Jewish intelligentsia view that the revolutionary movement be a broadly based democratic affair on the order of the social democratic movement in Western Europe. Martov's internationalism may be equated to this idea as well. As a Jew he tended to support the international interpretation of

Marxism over the distinctly Russian interpretation advanced by the Bolsheviks.

In summary, this thesis is an attempt to show that Yuri Martov's program for social democracy was dictated by his experience as a Jew in a hostile world, and though he was to waver from time to time, he tended to favor a revolutionary movement that permitted a free and uncontrolled growth--a program that would emancipate the Jew from the backward and oppressive autocracy.